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THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN OUR REVOLUTION

BY

V. I. LENIN

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EDITOR'S FOREWORD

LENIN arrived in Petrograd from his exile in Switzerland April 16, 1917. The following day he presented his views at a meeting of Bolshevik members of the national conference of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies in the form of theses published afterward under the title "The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution" (pp. 32-36). These theses, known in Bolshevik annals as the "April Theses," were in the main a succinct formulation of the views expressed in his "Letters from Afar." (See Little Lenin Library, Vol. 8.)

A more rounded out presentation of his position on the various national and international problems arising out of the Russian Revolution and the imperialist war, Lenin gave in "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution," written also in the form of theses and offered by him as a "platform of a proletarian party" (pp. 3-31). The principles and tactics enunciated by Lenin in this "platform" guided the strategy and action of the Bolsheviks during the transition from the bourgeois revolution in March to the proletarian revolution in November.

Lenin met with opposition among some Bolsheviks, particularly on the part of L. B. Kamenev, who disagreed fundamentally with his thesis regarding the nature of the revolution and the direction it must take. The question at issue was whether the bourgeois revolution had already completed its course and the prerequisites for its transition into the proletarian revolution were at hand. Lenin took up this basic point of difference in his "Letters on Tactics" (pp. 37-48), which together with the other writings included in this booklet served as the basic material for discussion on the eve of the national conference of the Bolshevik Party early in May (see Little Lenin Library, Vol. 10) at which the final policies and tactics were to be hammered out.

A. T.

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THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN OUR REVOLUTION

PROPOSED PLATFORM OF A PROLETARIAN PARTY

THE historical moment through which we are passing is characterised by the following fundamental traits:

THE CLASS CHARACTER OF THE REVOLUTION

1. The old tsarist power, which represented only a handful of feudal landowners in command of the entire state machinery (army, police, bureaucracy) has been shattered and removed, but not entirely destroyed. The monarchy has not been formally abolished. The Romanov coterie continues monarchist plots. The vast estates of the feudal landowners have not been liquidated.

2. State power in Russia has passed into the hands of a new class, namely, the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisified landowners. To *that* extent the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia has been completed.

Finding itself in power, the bourgeoisie formed a bloc with openly monarchist elements which became notorious by their unusually ardent support of Nicholas the Bloody and Stolypin the Hangman in 1906-1914 (Guchkov and other politicians to the right of the Cadets). The new bourgeois government of Lvov and Co. has attempted to negotiate with the Romanovs concerning the restoration of the monarchy in Russia. While shouting revolutionary phrases, this government has appointed partisans of the old régime to positions of authority. Having turned over the entire state machinery (army, police, bureaucracy) to the bourgeoisie, this government strives to reform it as little as possible. The revolutionary initiative of mass action and the seizure of power by the people from below, this only assurance of a real success of the revolution, already meets with all sorts of obstacles on the part of the new government.

The government has not as yet announced the date for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. Neither does it touch the

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ownership of the landed estates, this material foundation of feudal tsarism. The government does not even contemplate starting an investigation of the activities, or making public the activities, or controlling the monopolistic financial organisations of the large banks, the syndicates and cartels of the capitalists, etc.

The main and decisive ministerial posts in the new government (the ministry of the interior, the war ministry, *i. e.*, the command over the army, the police, the bureaucracy and the entire machinery for the oppression of the masses) belong to notorious monarchists and adherents of the large landholding system. The Cadets, those republican since yesterday, republicans against their will, have been given posts of secondary importance, in no way connected with authority over the people and with the machinery of state power. A. Kerensky, a representative of the Trudoviks * and "also a Socialist," does literally nothing else but lull to sleep the people's watchfulness and attention with well-sounding phrases.

For all these reasons, the new bourgeois government does not deserve the proletariat's confidence even in the field of internal politics, and no support of it is admissible on the part of the workers.

The Foreign Policies of the New Government

3. In the domain of foreign policy, which was placed in the forefront in consequence of objective conditions, the new government stands for the continuation of the imperialist war waged in concert with the imperialist powers, England, France, and others, for the sake of sharing capitalist spoils, for the sake of strangling small and weak peoples.

Dominated by the interests of Russian capital and its powerful protector and master, Anglo-French imperialist capital, which is the wealthiest in all the world, the new government, despite the wishes expressed most definitely in the name of a clear majority of the Russian peoples through the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, has taken no real steps whatever towards stopping the slaughter of peoples for the interests of the capitalists. It has not even published the secret treaties of a frankly predatory character (concerning the partition of Persia, the robbing of China, the robbing of Turkey, the annexation of East Prussia, the annexation

* A parliamentary group primarily of peasant deputies under the influence of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party.—*Ed.*

of the German colonies, etc.) which, as everybody knows, bind Russia to Anglo-French imperialist and predatory capital. It has confirmed these treaties concluded by tsarism which for several centuries robbed and oppressed more peoples than did all other tyrants and despots, tsarism which not only oppressed but also disgraced and demoralised the Great-Russian people by transforming it into an executioner of other peoples.

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The new government, having confirmed those shameful and predatory treaties, has not offered to all the belligerent peoples an immediate armistice, in spite of the clearly expressed demands of a majority of the peoples of Russia voiced through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. It has evaded the issue by resorting to solemn, sonorous, glittering but perfectly empty phrases and declarations, which have always served, and do serve, in the mouths of bourgeois diplomats to deceive the gullible and naïve masses of an oppressed people.

4. This is why the new government not only does not deserve the slightest confidence in the domain of foreign policy, but even to demand of it that it should make known the will of the peoples of Russia for peace, that it should renounce annexations, etc., would, in reality, mean to deceive the people, to awaken in them hopes that cannot be realised, to retard their intellectual enlightenment, indirectly to reconcile them to a continuation of a war of which the social character is determined not by good wishes but by the class character of the government that wages the war, by the alliance between the class represented by that government and the imperialist finance capital of Russia, England and France, etc., by that real and actual policy which that class conducts.

Unique Dual Power and Its Class Meaning

5. The main peculiarity of our revolution, a peculiarity most urgently requiring thoughtful analysis, is dual power established during the very first days after the victory of the revolution. This dual power is expressed in the existence of two governments: one is the main, real, actual government of the bourgeoisie, the "Provisional Government" of Lvov and Co. which has in its hands all the organs of power; the other is an additional, a parallel, a "controlling" government, the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, which has no organs of state power in its hands,

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but which is based directly on a clear majority of the people, on the armed workers and soldiers.

The class origin and the class meaning of this dual power is to be found in the fact that the March Revolution has not only swept away the entire tsarist monarchy, has not only transferred all power to the bourgeoisie, but has also come close to a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. Precisely such a dictatorship (that is, power resting not on law but on the direct force of armed masses of the population) and precisely of the above-mentioned classes is the Petrograd and other local Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

6. The second highly important feature of the Russian Revolution is the circumstance that the Petrograd Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies, which obviously enjoys the confidence of most of the local Soviets, voluntarily transfers state power to the bourgeoisie and its Provisional Government, voluntarily surrenders to the latter its own supremacy after having entered into an agreement to support it, and limits itself to the rôle of a supervising body assuring the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (the date for the convocation of which has not as yet been announced by the Provisional Government).

This most peculiar situation, unparallelled in history, has led to the simultaneous existence and interlocking of two dictatorships: the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (for the Provisional Government of Lvov and Co. is a dictatorship, *i. e.*, power based not on law nor on a previously expressed will of the people, but on seizure by force, which seizure was accomplished by a definite class, namely, the bourgeoisie) and the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry (the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies).

There is not the slightest doubt but that such a combination cannot last long. There can be no two powers in a state. One of them is bound to dwindle to nothing, and the entire Russian bourgeoisie is already straining all its energies everywhere and in every possible way in an endeavour to weaken, to set aside, to reduce to nothing the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, to create one single power for the bourgeoisie.

Dual power expresses merely a transition moment in the development of the revolution, when it has gone farther than the usual bourgeois-democratic revolution, but has not yet reached a "pure" dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

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The class meaning (and class explanation) of this transitional, unstable situation consists in the following: Like every other revolution, our revolution demanded the greatest heroism and self-sacrifice on the part of the masses in the struggle against tsarism, and all at once it set in motion an unusually large number of people.

One of the chief symptoms, from the point of view of science and practical politics, of every real revolution is the unusually brusque, sharp and sudden increase in the number of the average run of people who begin to participate, actively, independently, and forcefully, in political life, in the state apparatus.

This is the case of Russia. Russia is now in a state of ebullition. Millions of people, politically asleep for ten years, politically crushed by the terrible pressure of tsarism and slave labour for landowners and manufacturers, have awakened and thrown themselves into politics. Who are these millions of people? Mostly small proprietors, petty-bourgeois, people half way between capitalists and wage workers. Russia is the most petty-bourgeois of all the European countries.

A gigantic petty-bourgeois wave has swept everything, has overwhelmed the class-conscious proletariat not only numerically but also ideologically, *i. e.*, it has infected, it has captured very wide circles of workers with the political ideals of the petty bourgeoisie.

The petty bourgeoisie, in real life, depends upon the bourgeoisie; living, as it does, not like proletarians, but like property-owners (as far as its position in social production is concerned), it also follows the bourgeoisie in its way of thinking.

An attitude of unreasoning confidence in the capitalists, the worst foes of peace and Socialism,—such is at present the attitude of the Russian masses, such is the feeling that has grown with revolutionary rapidity out of the socio-economic soil of the most petty-bourgeois country of Europe. Such is the class basis for the "agreement" existing between the Provisional Government and the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (I emphasise that I have in mind not so much formal agreement as practical support, tacit understanding, a naïvely trustful yielding of power)—an agreement that has given to the Guchkovs a fat morsel, actual power, whereas to the Soviet it gave promises, honour (for the time being), flattery, phrases, assurances, curtsies on the part of the Kerenskys.

The insufficient numerical strength of the proletariat in Russia,

its insufficient class-consciousness and organisation—this is the reverse of the same medal.

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All the Narodnik parties,* including the Socialists-Revolutionists, have always been petty-bourgeois. The same is true of the party of the Organisation Committee † (Chkheidze, Tsereteli, etc.); the independent revolutionists (Steklov and others) have equally drifted with the tide, at least they have not overcome it, they have had no time to overcome the tide.

The Peculiarity of the Tactics Following from the Above

7. From the peculiarity of the actual situation indicated above follows the peculiarity of present tactics, which are obligatory for a Marxist who reckons with objective facts, with masses and classes, rather than with persons, etc.

This peculiarity makes it imperative "to pour vinegar and bile into the sweetish water of revolutionary democratic eloquence" (as a fellow member of the Central Committee, Teodorovich, expressed himself—most aptly—at yesterday's session of the All-Russian Congress of Railroad Employés and Workers in Petrograd). We must do the work of criticism, expose the mistakes of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionist and Social-Democratic parties, prepare and weld together the elements of a class-conscious proletarian Communist Party, free the proletariat from the spell of the "common" petty-bourgeois delusion.

In appearance this is "nothing more" than propaganda work. In reality, this is the most practical revolutionary work, for a revolution cannot possibly be moved forward when it stalls, it chokes on phrases, it treads everlastingly the same spot not because of outside obstacles, not because the bourgeoisie uses force (so far Guchkov only threatens to use force against the soldiers), but simply by the unthinking confidence of the masses.

Only by combating this unthinking confidence (and one can and must combat it only ideologically, by comradely persuasion, by

* Populists.—*Ed.*

† The Central Committee elected at the 1912 Conference was the organisational centre of the Bolsheviks, while the Organisation Committee was that of the Mensheviks.—*Ed.*

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reference to life's experience) can we free ourselves from the reigning bacchanalia of revolutionary phrases and make real progress in stimulating the class-consciousness of the proletariat and of the masses in general, as well as their determined initiative everywhere, their self-willed realisation, development and strengthening of liberties, democracy, and the principle of national ownership of all the land.

8. The world-wide experience of bourgeois and feudal governments has developed two methods of keeping people enslaved. The first is violence. Nicholas Romanov I, called Nicholas Palkin,* and Nicholas II, the Bloody, showed to the Russian people a maximum of what is possible and impossible in the use of this, the hangman's method. But there is another method, the one best developed by the English and French bourgeoisie, who were "taught" by a series of great revolutions and revolutionary movements of the masses. This is the method of deception, flattery, pretty phrases, innumerable promises, cheap sops, conceding the unimportant, retaining the important.

The peculiarity of the present moment in Russia consists in a dizzyingly rapid transition from the first method to the second, from violent oppression of the people to flattery and deceitful promises. Vaska the cat listens, but continues eating.† Miliukov and Guchkov hold power, protect the profits of capital, conduct an imperialist war in the interests of Russian and Anglo-French capital, while confining themselves to promises, declamation, impressive statements in reply to the speeches of "cooks" like Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov, who threaten, exhort, conjure, beseech, demand, declare. . . . Vaska the cat listens, but continues eating.

But from day to day the trustful thoughtlessness and thoughtless trustfulness will dwindle away, especially among the proletarians and poorest peasants, whom life (their socio-economic position) teaches to distrust the capitalists.

The leaders of the petty bourgeoisie "must" teach the people to trust the bourgeoisie. The proletarians must teach the people to distrust it.

* From the Russian word *palka*, meaning stick, club.—*Ed.*

† Quotation from a fable by Krylov. The cook finds the cat eating chicken; the cook uses moral suasion. The cat listens but continues eating. Vaska is the Russian pet name for a tom cat.—*Ed.*

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9. Revolutionary defencism must be recognised as the most imposing and striking manifestation of the petty-bourgeois wave which has overwhelmed "nearly everything." It is, indeed, the worst enemy of the further progress and success of the Russian Revolution.

Whoever has yielded on this point and has been unable to free himself is lost to the revolution. The masses, however, yield in a way different from that of the leaders, and they free themselves also differently, by another course of development, by other means.

Revolutionary defencism is, on the one hand, the result of the deception practiced on the masses by the bourgeoisie, the result of the peasants' and part of the workers' unthinking confidence; and on the other, the expression of the interests and standpoint of the petty proprietor, who to a certain extent is interested in annexations and bank profits, and who "religiously" guards the traditions of tsarism which demoralised the Great-Russians by doing hangman's work among other peoples.

The bourgeoisie deceives the people by playing upon the noble pride of the revolution and by painting the situation in a manner as if the socio-political character of the war, as far as Russia is concerned, has changed with the coming of this stage of the revolution, with the substitution of the bourgeois near-republic of Guchkov and Miliukov for the Tsar's monarchy. The people believe it,—for the time being—thanks, in a large degree, to the prejudices of old times, which cause them to see in the other peoples of Russia, outside of the Great-Russians, something like the property and the domain of the Great-Russians. The hideous demoralisation of the Great-Russian people by tsarism, which taught it to see in other peoples something inferior, something that "by right" belonged to Great-Russia, could not disappear at once.

It is required of us that we should be able to explain to the masses that the socio-political character of the war is determined not by the "good-will" of persons or groups, even peoples, but by the position of the class which conducts the war, by the class policy of which the war is a continuation, by the interrelations of capital as the dominant economic force in modern society, by the imperialist character of international capital by Russia's financial, banking, and diplomatic dependence upon England and France, etc. To

explain this to the masses, skilfully and clearly, is not easy; none of us could do that all at once without errors.

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But such, and only such, should be the trend or, rather, the contents of our propaganda. The slightest concession to revolutionary defencism is treason to Socialism, is a complete abandonment of internationalism, no matter what the beautiful phrases, what the "practical" considerations by which we may justify it.

The slogan, "Down with the War," is correct, to be sure, but it does not take into account the peculiarity of the tasks of the moment, the necessity to approach the masses in a different way. It reminds me of another slogan, "Down with the Tsar," with which an inexperienced agitator of the "good old days" went directly and simply to the village—to be beaten up. Those from the masses who are for revolutionary defencism are sincere, not in a personal, but in a class sense, *i. e.*, they belong to such classes (workers and poor peasants) as really gain nothing from annexations and the strangling of other peoples. They are quite different from the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia who know very well that it is impossible to give up annexations without giving up the rule of capital, and who unscrupulously deceive the masses with beautiful phrases, with no end of promises, no end of assurances.

The average person who favours revolutionary defencism looks upon the thing in a simple matter-of-fact way: "I, for one, do not want any annexations, but the German 'presses' me hard, that means that I am defending a just cause and not any imperialist interests." To a man like this it must be explained very patiently that it is not a question of his personal wishes, but of mass, class, political relationships and conditions, of the connection between the war and the interests of capital, the war and the international network of banks, etc. Only such a struggle against defencism is serious and promises success, perhaps not very quick, but real and durable.

How the War Can Be Ended

10. The war cannot be ended "at will." It cannot be ended by the decision of one side. It cannot be ended by "sticking the bayonet into the ground," to use the expression of a soldier-defencist.

The war cannot be ended by an "agreement" between the Socialists of various countries, by "demonstrations" of the proletarians of various countries, by the "will" of the peoples, etc. All such

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phrases, filling the articles of the defencist, semi-defencist and semi-internationalist papers, as well as the numerous resolutions, appeals, manifestos, declarations of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, all these phrases are nothing but empty, harmless, goody-goody wishes of the petty-bourgeois. There is nothing more harmful than phrases like the "manifestation of the people's will to peace," the sequence of revolutionary proletarian actions (after the Russian proletariat comes the German), etc. All this is in the spirit of Louis Blanc, it is sweet dreams, a game of "political campaigning," in reality a repetition of the fable about Vaska the cat.

The war was not born out of the ill-will of capitalist robbers, although it undoubtedly is fought solely in their interests and they alone get rich from it. The war was born out of half a century of development of international capital, its billions of threads and connections. One cannot jump out of an imperialist war, one cannot attain a democratic unoppressive peace without overthrowing the power of capital, without the state power passing to a different class, the proletariat.

The Russian Revolution of March, 1917, was the beginning of the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war. The revolution took the first step towards ending the war. Only the second step can make the end of the war a certainty, namely, the passing of state power to the proletariat. This will be the beginning of a "breach in the front" on a world scale, a breach in the front of the interests of capital, and only after making this gap can the proletariat save mankind from the horrors of war and give it the blessings of a durable peace.

To such a "breach in the front" of capital the Russian Revolution has already brought the Russian proletariat by creating the Soviets of Workers' Deputies.

The New Type of State Arising in Our Revolution

11. The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', etc., Deputies are not understood, not only in the sense that their class character, their part in the Russian Revolution, is not clear to the majority. They are not understood also in the sense that they constitute a new form, rather, a new type of state.

The most perfect and advanced type of bourgeois state is that of a parliamentary democratic republic: power is vested in parlia-

ment; state machinery, organ of administration are the usual ones: a standing army, police, bureaucracy, practically unchangeable, privileged, and standing above the people.

But revolutionary epochs, beginning with the end of the nineteenth century, bring to the fore the highest type of democratic state, the kind of state which in certain respects, to quote Engels, ceases to be a state, "is no state in the proper sense of the word." This is a state of the type of the Paris Commune, a state replacing the standing army and the police by a direct arming of the people itself. This is the essence of the Commune, which has been so much misrepresented and slandered by bourgeois writers, which, among other things, has been erroneously accused of wishing to "introduce" Socialism immediately.

This is the type of state which the Russian Revolution began to create in the years 1905 and 1917. A Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Peasants', etc., Deputies, united in an all-Russian Constituent Assembly of the people's representatives, or in a Soviet of Soviets, etc.—this is what is already coming into life now, at this very time, upon the initiative of millions of people who, of their own accord, are creating a democracy in their own way, without waiting until Cadet gentlemen-professors will have written drafts of laws for a parliamentary bourgeois republic, or until the pedants and routine worshippers of petty-bourgeois "Social-Democracy," like Plekhanov and Kautsky, have abandoned their distortion of the teaching of Marxism concerning the state.

Marxism differs from Anarchism in that it admits the necessity of the state and state power in a revolutionary period in general, and in the epoch of transition from capitalism to Socialism in particular.

Marxism differs from the petty-bourgeois, opportunist "Social-Democracy" of Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co. in that it admits the necessity for the above-mentioned periods of a state not like the usual parliamentary bourgeois republic, but like the Paris Commune.

The main differences between the latter type of state and the bourgeois state are the following:

It is extremely easy to revert from a bourgeois republic to a monarchy (as history proves), since all the machinery of repression is left intact: army, police, bureaucracy. The Commune and the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies smash and remove that machinery.

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A parliamentary bourgeois republic strangles and crushes the independent political life of the masses, their direct participation in the democratic upbuilding of all state life from top to bottom. The opposite is true about the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

The latter reproduce the type of state that was being evolved by the Paris Commune and that Marx called the "finally discovered political form in which the economic liberation of the toilers can take place."

The usual objection is that the Russian people is not as yet prepared for the "introduction" of a Commune. This was the argument of serf owners who claimed that the peasants were not prepared for freedom. The Commune, *i. e.*, the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies, does not "introduce," does not intend to "introduce" and should not introduce any reorganisations which are not absolutely ripe both in economic reality and in the consciousness of an overwhelming majority of the people. The more terrible the economic collapse and the crisis produced by the war, the more urgent is the need of a most perfect political form which facilitates the healing of the wounds inflicted by the war upon mankind. The less organisational experience the Russian people has, the more determinedly must we proceed with the organisational development of the people, not leaving it merely to the bourgeois politicians and bureaucrats with sinecures.

The sooner we cast off the pseudo-Marxian prejudices of Plekhanov, Kautsky and Co., the more diligently we start helping the people everywhere and immediately to organise Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies; the longer Messrs. Lvov and Co. procrastinate the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, the easier will it be for the people to make (through the medium of the Constituent Assembly, or outside of it, if Lvov delays its convocation long) its decision in favour of a Republic of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies. Blunders in the new organisational reconstruction by the people are inevitable at the beginning, but it is better to blunder while progressing than to wait until the professors of law called by Mr. Lvov will have written laws concerning the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, the perpetuation of the parliamentary bourgeois republic and the strangulation of the Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies.

If we organise and conduct our propaganda efficiently, not only the proletarians but nine-tenths of the peasantry will be against the

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re-establishment of the police, against an irremovable and privileged bureaucracy, against an army separated from the people. This alone constitutes the new type of state.

12. The substitution of a national militia for the police is a transformation that follows from the entire course of the revolution and that is now being introduced in most localities of Russia. We must make it clear to the masses that in the majority of revolutions of the usual bourgeois type, a transformation of that sort was very ephemeral and that the bourgeoisie, however democratic and republican it may have been, soon re-established the police of the old tsarist type, a police separated from the people, commanded by bourgeois and capable of oppressing the people in every way.

There is only one way to prevent the re-establishment of the old police: to organise a national militia, to fuse it with the army (the standing army to be replaced by a general arming of the people). The militia should comprise all citizens of both sexes between the ages of fifteen and sixty-five, these age limits being selected approximately to exclude minors and old people. Capitalists should pay their employés, servants and others for the days devoted to public service in the militia. Unless women are drawn into taking an independent part not only in political life generally, but also in daily social service obligatory to every one, it is idle to speak not only of Socialism but even of complete and stable democracy. Certain "police" functions, such as the care of the sick, of the homeless children, pure food supervision, etc., will never be satisfactorily discharged until women are on a footing of perfect equality with men, not only on paper but in reality.

To prevent the re-establishment of the police, to attract all organisational forces of the entire people to the creation of a universal militia—such are the tasks that the proletariat must bring to the masses in order to protect, strengthen and develop the revolution.

The Agrarian and the National Programmes

13. We cannot know for certain at present whether a gigantic agrarian revolution will develop in the near future in the Russian village. We cannot know how deep is the class cleavage that has undoubtedly deepened in recent time between agricultural labourers and the poorest peasants ("semi-proletarians") on the one hand, and

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the well-to-do and middle peasants (capitalists and petty capitalists) on the other. All such questions will be decided, and can be decided, by experience only.

We are in duty bound, however, as the party of the proletariat, immediately to step forth not only with an agrarian programme but also with the advocacy of immediately realisable practical measures in the interests of a peasant agrarian revolution in Russia.

We must demand the nationalisation of all lands, *i. e.*, the passing of all land ownership in the state to the central state power. This power shall fix the size, etc., of the migration fund,* issue laws for the conservation of forests, for melioration, etc., absolutely prohibit the intercession of middlemen between the landowner—the state—and the tenant—the tiller (prohibit every transfer of land). The disposition of all the land, however, the working out of all local rules of ownership and use, must not be left in the hands of bureaucrats and officials but be vested, wholly and exclusively, in the local and regional Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

In order to improve the technique of grain raising and to increase production in general, in order also to develop rational cultivation on a large scale, socially controlled, we must see to it that every Peasants' Committee organises out of the various estates confiscated by it a large model estate controlled by the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies.

To offset the petty-bourgeois phrases and policy of the Socialists-Revolutionists, particularly the empty words concerning the "standard of consumption" or "labour standard," the "socialisation of the land," etc., the party of the proletariat must make it clear that the system of small peasant households where production for the market prevails cannot save mankind from poverty or oppression.

Without necessarily splitting at once the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies, the party of the proletariat must make clear the necessity of organising special Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies and special Soviets of Deputies from the poorest (semi-proletarian) peasants or, at least, special conferences of Deputies of the same class position continually meeting as separate groups or parties within the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies. Otherwise all the sugary phraseology of the Narodniks on the subject of the peasants gen-

* Land to be allotted to peasants desirous of migrating from congested areas.—*Ed.*

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erally will prove a shield to cover up the deception of the destitute mass by the well-to-do peasants who are only one of the varieties of capitalists.

To offset the bourgeois-liberal or purely bureaucratic preachments on the part of many Socialists-Revolutionists and Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies who advise the peasants not to seize the landlords' lands and not to start any agrarian reform pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, the party of the proletariat must urge the peasants to bring about at once, on their own initiative, the agrarian transformation, and to confiscate at once the landlords' lands by the decisions of the local Soviets of Peasants' Deputies.

In this connection, it is particularly important to insist on the necessity of increasing the production of foodstuffs for the soldiers at the front and for the cities, on the absolute inadmissibility of any kind of destruction or wastage of stock, tools, machinery, buildings, etc.

14. As regards the national question, the proletarian party must, first of all, insist on the promulgation and immediate realisation of full freedom of separation from Russia for all nations and peoples who were oppressed by tsarism, who were forcibly included or forcibly retained within the boundaries of the state, *i. e.*, annexed.

All statements, declarations and manifestoes concerning the renunciation of annexations not accompanied by actual realisation of the freedom of separation, reduce themselves to bourgeois deception of the people, or to petty-bourgeois pious wishes.

The proletarian party strives to create as large a state as possible, for this is in the interest of the workers; it strives to bring the nations closely together, to fuse them, but it intends to bring that about not by the use of force, but only by a free, brotherly union of the workers and the toiling masses of all nations.

The more democratic the Russian republic is, the more speedily it will organise itself into a republic of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies, the more powerful the force of attraction such a republic will be for the toiling masses of all nations.

Full freedom of separation, the broadest possible local (and national) autonomy, guarantees for the rights of national minorities elaborated in detail—such is the programme of the revolutionary proletariat.

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15. The party of the proletariat cannot by any means make it its aim to introduce Socialism in a country of small peasantry as long as the overwhelming majority of the population has not realised the necessity of a Socialist revolution.

Only bourgeois sophists, however, hiding behind "near-Marxist" phrases, can deduct from this truth a justification of a policy that tends to put off immediate revolutionary measures, which are perfectly ripe, which were frequently introduced during the war by a number of bourgeois states, and which are absolutely necessary for the struggle against approaching total economic disorganisation and famine.

Such measures as the nationalisation of the land, of all the banks and capitalist syndicates or, at least, the establishment of an immediate control of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies over them, by no means signifying the "introduction" of Socialism, must be absolutely fought for, and as far as possible introduced in a revolutionary way. Without such measures, which are only steps toward Socialism, and which are completely realisable economically, it is impossible to heal the wounds inflicted by the war and to prevent the threatening collapse. The party of the revolutionary proletariat will never hesitate to lay hands on the unheard-of profits of the capitalists and bankers who enrich themselves most scandalously "in the war."

THE STATE OF AFFAIRS IN THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL

16. The international obligations of the Russian working class have been put in the forefront most forcibly these days.

Everybody swears by internationalism in our day; even chauvinist-defencists, even Messrs., Plekhanov and Potresov, even Kerensky, call themselves internationalists. The more urgent is the duty of the proletarian party to contrast, most clearly, decisively, definitely, internationalism in deed with internationalism in words.

Mere appeals to the workers of all countries, empty professions of international faith, direct or indirect attempts to establish a "sequence" of proletarian action in the various belligerent countries, attempts at concluding "agreements" between the Socialists of the belligerent countries concerning revolutionary struggle,

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pother about Socialist congresses aiming at peace propaganda,—all this, as far as the objective meaning is concerned, no matter how sincere the authors of such ideas, attempts and plans may be, is mere talk, at best innocent little wishes good only to cover up the deception of the masses by the chauvinists. The French social-chauvinists, most adroit and best versed in methods of parliamentary juggling, have long since broken the record of spouting incredibly loud and ringing pacifist and internationalist phrases coupled with the most brazen betrayal of Socialism and the International, by entering governments that are waging an imperialist war, by voting for credits or loans (as Chkheidze, Skobelev, Tsereteli and Steklov have been doing recently in Russia) and actively opposing the revolutionary struggle in their own country, etc., etc.

Good people often forget the cruel, savage setting of the imperialist World War. In such a setting, phrases are intolerable; innocent sweet wishes are despicable.

There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism: hard work at developing the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in one's own land, and the support (by propaganda, sympathy, material aid) of such, and only such, struggles and policies in every country without exception.

Everything else is deception and Manilovism.*

The international Socialist and labour movement the world over has in the course of two and a half years of war evolved three tendencies. Whoever declines to recognise the existence of these three tendencies, to analyse them, to fight persistently for real active internationalism, condemns himself to impotence, helplessness and errors.

The three tendencies are:

1. Social-chauvinists, *i. e.*, Socialists in words and chauvinists in fact, people who are for "national defence" in any imperialist war (and particularly in this imperialist war).

These men are our class enemies. They have gone over to the bourgeoisie.

Such is the majority among the official leaders of the official Social-Democracy in every country. Plekhanov and Co. in Russia, the Scheidemanns in Germany, Renaudel, Guesde and Sembat in

* Manilov is a character in Gogol's *Dead Souls* who is sentimental and dreams of impossible things.—*Ed.*

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France, Bissolati and Co. in Italy, Hyndman, the Fabians and the Labourites in England, Branting and Co. in Sweden, Troelstra and his party in Holland, Stauning and his party in Denmark, Victor Berger and other "defenders of the fatherland" in America, etc.

2. The second tendency, the so-called "centre," people vacillating between social-chauvinism and real internationalism.

Those of the "centre" swear and vow that they are Marxists, internationalists, that they are for peace, for exerting "pressure" upon the governments, for presenting all sorts of "demands" to the governments that the latter "manifest the people's will to peace," for all sorts of peace campaigns, for peace without annexations, etc., etc.,—and for peace with the social-chauvinists. The "centre" is for "unity," the "centre" is against schism.

The "centre" is a realm of sweet petty-bourgeois phrases, of internationalism in words, cowardly opportunism and fawning before the social-chauvinists in deeds.

The gist of the matter is that the members of the "centre" do not believe in the necessity of revolution against their bourgeois governments; do not preach such revolution; do not carry on any determined revolutionary struggles, but in order to dodge such struggles resort to trite and most "Marxist" sounding excuses.

The social-chauvinists are our class enemies, they are bourgeois elements in the labour movement. Objectively they represent strata or groups of the working class bribed by the bourgeoisie (better wages, positions of honour, etc.) and helping their bourgeoisie to rob and oppress small and weak peoples, to fight for the division of capitalist spoils.

The members of the "centre" group are routine worshippers, slaves of rotten legality, corrupted by parliamentarism, etc., bureaucrats accustomed to nice sinecures and "peaceful" labours. Historically and economically, they do not represent any special stratum of society; they only represent the transition from the earlier labour movement as it was between 1871 and 1914, from a period that had given much valuable experience to the proletariat particularly in the indispensable art of slow, continued, systematic organisation work on a large, very large, scale, to the new period which has become objectively necessary since the first imperialist World War which has inaugurated the era of social revolution.

In Karl Kautsky, the main leader and representative of the "centre" and the most outstanding authority in the Second International

(1889-1914), we have seen since August, 1914, a complete breakdown of Marxism, an unheard-of lack of principles, a series of most pitiful vacillations and betrayals. Among these centrists are Kautsky, Haase, Ledebour, and the so-called "labour-group" [*Arbeitsgemeinschaft*] in the Reichstag; in France, Longuet, Pressemane and the so-called "*minoritaires*" (Mensheviks) in general; in England, Philip Snowden, Ramsay MacDonald and numerous other leaders of the Independent Labour Party, and a part of the British Socialist Party; Morris Hillquit and many others in the United States; Turati, Treves, Modigliani and others in Italy; Robert Grimm and others in Switzerland; Victor Adler and Co. in Austria; the party of the Organisation Committee, Axelrod, Martov, Chkheidze, Tsereteli and others in Russia, etc.

It goes without saying that at times individual persons do unconsciously drift from social-chauvinism to "centrism," and vice versa. Every Marxist knows, however, that classes retain their distinguishing characteristics regardless of the free movement of individuals from one class to another; similarly, movements in political life retain their distinguishing characteristics regardless of the free migration of individuals from one movement to another, and despite all attempts and efforts to fuse movements.

3. The third, real internationalist trend is most nearly represented by the "Zimmerwald Left." In the supplement we reprint its Manifesto of September, 1915, so that the reader may become acquainted with the inception of this movement.

It is characterised by the complete break with social-chauvinism and "centrism," a relentless war against the imperialist home government and the imperialist home bourgeoisie. Its principle is "Our greatest enemy is at home." A ruthless struggle against nauseatingly sweet social-pacifist phrases (a social-pacifist is a Socialist in words, and a bourgeois-pacifist in deeds; bourgeois-pacifists dream of an everlasting peace without the overthrow of the yoke and domination of capital) and against all sophistry employed to demonstrate the impossibility, the inappropriateness, the untimeliness of a proletarian revolutionary struggle, of a proletarian Socialist revolution in connection with the present war.

The most outstanding representative of this tendency in Germany is the "Spartacus" * or "International" Group, to which Karl Lieb-

* The group of revolutionary internationalists who later formed the Communist Party of Germany.—*Ed.*

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knecht belongs. Karl Liebknecht is the best-known representative of this tendency and of the *new*, real, proletarian International.

Karl Liebknecht called upon the workers and soldiers of Germany to turn their guns upon their own government. Karl Liebknecht did that openly from the tribune of parliament, the Reichstag. He then went out to a demonstration on Potsdamer Platz, one of the largest public squares in Berlin, distributing illegally printed proclamations carrying the slogan "Down with the government." He was arrested and sentenced to hard labour. He is now serving his term in a German prison, like hundreds, if not thousands, of other real German Socialists who have been imprisoned for waging a struggle against war.

Karl Liebknecht attacked mercilessly in his speeches and his writings not only the German Plekhanovs and the Potresovs (the Scheidemanns, Legiens, Davids, etc.), but also the German centrists, the German Chkheidzes and Tseretelis (Kautsky, Haase, Ledebour and Co.).

Karl Liebknecht and his friend, Otto Rühle, two out of one hundred and ten [Social-Democratic] Deputies in the Reichstag, broke the discipline, destroyed the "unity" with the "centre" and the chauvinists, and fought against everybody. Liebknecht alone represents Socialism, the proletarian cause, the proletarian revolution. The rest of the German Social-Democracy, to quote the apt words of Rosa Luxemburg (also a member and one of the leaders of the Spartacus group), is "a stinking corpse."

Another group of real internationalists in Germany is gathered around the Bremen paper, *Arbeiterpolitik.*

Closest to real internationalists are: in France, Loriot and his friends (Bourderon and Merrheim have degenerated into social-pacificism), as well as the Frenchman Henri Guilbeaux, who is publishing in Switzerland a paper called *Demain;* in England, the paper *Trade Unionist,* and some of the members of the British Socialist Party and of the Independent Labour Party (for instance, William Russell, who has openly called for a break with the leaders who have betrayed Socialism), the Scottish public school teacher and Socialist, MacLean, who has been sentenced to hard labour by the bourgeois government of England for his revolutionary activity against the war; hundreds of English Socialists who are in jail for the same offence. They, only they, are internationalists in deed. In the United States, the Socialist Labour

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Party and certain elements of the opportunist Socialist Party which in January, 1917, began to publish the paper *The Internationalist;* in Holland, the party of the "Tribunists," those who publish the daily paper *Tribune* (Anton Pannekoek, Herman Gorter, Wynkoop, and Henriette Roland-Holst, who, though a centrist at Zimmerwald, has now joined our ranks); in Sweden, the party of the youth or the Left with leaders such as Lindhagen, Ture Nerman, Carlson, Ström and S. Höglund, who at Zimmerwald was personally active in the organisation of the Zimmerwald Left, and who is now serving a prison term for his activity against the war; in Denmark, Trier and his friends who have left the now purely bourgeois "Social-Democratic" Party, headed by Minister Stauning; in Bulgaria, the "narrow-minded";* in Italy, the closest are Constantino Lazzari, secretary of the party, and Serrati, editor of the central organ, Avanti; in Poland, Karl Radek, Hanecki and other leaders of the Social-Democracy, united through the "District Administration"; Rosa Luxemburg, Tyszka, and other leaders of the Social-Democracy united through the "Central Administration"; in Switzerland, those "Lefts," who wrote the supporting argument for the "referendum" (January, 1917), in order to fight against the social-chauvinists and the "centre" of their country and who at the Zürich Canton Socialist Convention, held at Töss on February 11, 1917, introduced a consistently revolutionary resolution against the war; in Austria, the young Left-wing friends of Friedrich Adler, who have been acting partly through the "Karl Marx" Club, at Vienna, a club now closed by the very reactionary Austrian government which is destroying Adler for his heroic but ill-considered attempt upon the life of the Prime Minister, etc., etc.

It is not a matter of shadings, these exist even among the "Lefts." It is a matter of the entire tendency. The point is, that it is by no means easy to be an internationalist in deeds during a terrible imperialist war. Such people are rare, but it is on them alone that the future of Socialism depends; they alone are the leaders of the masses, not the corrupters of the masses.

The difference between reformists and revolutionists in the ranks of the Social-Democrats and Socialists in general cannot but undergo, objectively, a positive change in the midst of an imperialist war. He who simply confines himself to "demanding" from bourgeois

* The revolutionary internationalist wing of the Bulgarian Social-Democracy. —*Ed.*

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governments "the conclusion of peace" the manifestation of the will of the peoples toward peace," etc., is, in fact, degenerating into a reformist. For, objectively, the problem of war can be solved only in a revolutionary way.

There is no escape from this war to a democratic, non-oppressive peace, to a liberation of the peoples from the yoke of paying billions of interest to the capitalists enriched by the war, there is no other escape except a proletarian revolution.

We can, and we must, demand all sorts of reforms from the bourgeois governments, but it is impossible, without falling into Manilovism and reformism, to demand from those people and classes who are entangled by a thousand ties of imperialist capital to break those ties; yet unless we break those ties all talk of war against war is empty, deceitful prattle.

The "Kautskians," the "centre," are revolutionists in words, reformists in deeds, internationalists in words, supporters of social-chauvinism in deeds.

The Breakdown of the Zimmerwald International. The Necessity of Forming a Third International

17. The Zimmerwald International took from the very first a vacillating, Kautskian, "centrist" position which immediately compelled the Zimmerwald Left to fence itself off, to separate itself from the rest, and to come forth with its own Manifesto (published in Switzerland in Russian, in German and in French).

The chief fault of the Zimmerwald International, the cause of its breakdown (for from a political and ideological viewpoint it has already broken down), was its vacillation, its indecision, when it came to the most important practical and all-determining question of breaking completely with the social-chauvinists and the old social-chauvinist International, headed by Vandervelde and Huysmans at The Hague (Holland), etc.

We Russians do not as yet know that the Zimmerwald majority are really Kautskians. But this is a basic fact which must not be minimised and of which Western Europe is now fully aware. Even that chauvinist, that extreme German chauvinist, Heilmann, editor of the arch-chauvinist *Chemnitzer Volksstimme* and contributor to the arch-chauvinist *Glocke* of Parvus (a "Social Democrat," of course, and an ardent partisan of the Social-Democratic "unity"),

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was compelled to acknowledge in the press that the "centre," or Kautskyism, and the Zimmerwald majority were one and the same thing.

The end of 1916 and the beginning of 1917 had definitely proved it. In spite of the condemnation of social-pacifism contained in the Kienthal Manifesto,* the whole Zimmerwald Right, the entire Zimmerwald majority, degenerated into social-pacifism: Kautsky and Co., in a series of declarations during the months of January and February, 1917; Bourderon and Merrheim in France, who cast their votes together with the social-chauvinists for the pacifist resolutions of the Socialist Party (December, 1916) and of the *Confédération Generale du Travail* (the national organisation of French labour unions), also in December, 1916; Turati and Co. in Italy, where the entire party took a social-pacifist position, while Turati himself, in a speech delivered on December 17, 1916, "slipped" (and not by accident, of course) into nationalistic phrases embellishing the imperialist war.

In January, 1917, the chairman of the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences, Robert Grimm, joined hands with the social-chauvinists of his own party (Greulich, Pflueger, Gustav Mueller and others) against the real internationalists.

At two conferences of Zimmerwaldists of various countries, held in January and February of 1917, this dual, double-faced behaviour of the Zimmerwald majority was formally stigmatised by the Left internationalists of several countries, by Münzenberg, secretary of the internationalist organisation of the Young People's [Socialist] movement and editor of the excellent internationalist publication *Die Jugendinternationale,* by Zinoviev, representative of the Central Committee of our party, by Karl Radek of the Polish Social-Democratic Party (the "District Administration"), by Hartstein, a German Social-Democrat and member of the "Spartacus Group."

To the Russian proletariat much has been given. Nowhere on earth has the working class yet succedeed in unfolding so much revolutionary energy as it has in Russia. But much is demanded from those to whom much is given.

We can stand no longer this Zimmerwald mire. We must not, on account of the Zimmerwald "Kautskians," remain more or less allied with the chauvinist International of the Plekhanovs and

* The Manifesto of the Conference held at Kienthal, Switzerland, in 1916 of internationalist groups dominated by Centrists.—*Ed.*

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Scheidemanns. We must break with the International immediately. We ought to remain in Zimmerwald only to gather information.

It is precisely we who must found, right now, without delay, a new, revolutionary, proletarian International, or rather, not to fear to acknowledge publicly that this new International is already established and working.

This is the International of those "internationalists in deed," whom I have fully enumerated above, they alone represent the revolutionary, internationalist masses, they and not the corrupters of the masses.

Even if there are few Socialists of that type, let every Russian worker ask himself how many really conscious revolutionists there were in Russia on the eve of the March Revolution in 1917.

It is not so much a question of numbers; it is a question of expressing correctly the ideas and the policy of the truly revolutionary proletariat. Never mind about "proclaiming" internationalism; the essential thing is for us to be, even when the times are most trying, real internationalists in deed.

Let us not deceive ourselves by hopes for agreements and international congresses. As long as this imperialist war lasts, international relations are held as in a vise by the military dictatorship of the imperialist bourgeoisie. If even the "republican" Miliukov who had to suffer the "parallel government" of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, did not allow into Russia, in April, 1917, Fritz Platten, the Swiss Socialist, secretary of the party and internationalist, member of the Zimmerwald and Kienthal conferences, although Platten was married to a Russian woman, and was going for a visit to his wife's relatives, and although he had taken part in the Revolution of 1905 in Riga, had served a term in a Russian prison for that offence, had given bail to the tsarist government for his release and wanted that bail returned to him—if the republican Miliukov could do such a thing, in April, 1917, and in Russia, then we can see how much stock we may take in the promises and offers, phrases and declarations made by the bourgeoisie on the subject of peace without annexations, etc.

And how about the arrest of Trotsky by the English Government? And how about Martov being refused permission to leave Switzerland; how about the attempt made to lure him to England, where he would share Trotsky's fate?

Let us not create illusions for ourselves. We need no self-deception.

"To wait" for international conferences and congresses is simply to betray internationalism, since it is established that Socialists loyal to internationalism are not allowed to come here even from Stockholm, they are not allowed even to send letters to us, despite the thoroughly rigorous military censorship that can be and is fully exercised on all writings.

Let us not "wait," let rather our party found at once a third International, and hundreds of Socialists imprisoned in England and in Germany will heave a sigh of relief; thousands upon thousands of German workers who are now organising strikes and demonstrations in an effort to frighten the scoundrel and murderer, Wilhelm, will read in illegal leaflets about our decision, about our fraternal confidence in Karl Liebknecht (and in him alone), about the decision to fight even now the "revolutionary defencists"; they will read and gain strength in their revolutionary internationalism.

Much is demanded from him to whom much is given. There is no other land on earth as free as Russia is now. Let us make use of this freedom not to support the bourgeoisie or bourgeois "revolutionary defencism," but to organise a third International, bold and honest and proletarian, the kind which Liebknecht would have, an International which will set its face boldly against all traitors, all social-chauvinists and the vacillating people of the "centre."

18. After what I have just said, I need not waste any words to explain that a union of the Social-Democrats of Russia is impossible.

Rather stay alone, as Liebknecht did, that is, remain with the revolutionary proletariat, than to entertain even for a minute any thought of a union with the party of the Organisation Committee, with Chkheidze and Tsereteli, who have joined hands with Potresov of the *Rabochaia Gazeta*, who voted for the war loan in the Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies, and who have degenerated into "revolutionary defencism."

Let the dead bury their dead.

Whosoever wants to help vacillating souls, should first stop vacillating himself.

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A Name for Our Party Which Would Be Scientifically Sound and Conducive to Proletarian Class Thinking

19. I am coming to the last point, the name of our party. We must call ourselves the Communist Party—just as Marx and Engels called themselves Communists.

We must insist that we are Marxists and that we have as a basis the *Communist Manifesto,* which has been perverted and betrayed by the Social-Democracy on two important points: (1) The workers have no country; "national defence" in an imperialist war is a betrayal of Socialism; (2) Marx's teaching about the state has been perverted by the Second International.

The term "Social-Democracy" is unscientific, as Marx showed repeatedly, particularly in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme,* in 1875, and as Engels restated in a more popular form, in 1894. Mankind can pass directly from capitalism only into Socialism, *i. e.,* into social ownership of the means of production and the distribution of products according to the work of the individual. Our party looks farther ahead than that: Socialism is bound sooner or later to ripen into Communism, whose banner bears the motto: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

That is the first reason.

Here is my second: The second part of the term "Social-*Democracy*" is scientifically wrong. Democracy is only a form of state, while we Marxists are opposed to every form of state.

The leaders of the Second International (1889-1914), Messrs. Plekhanov, Kautsky and their ilk, perverted and debased Marxism.

The difference between Marxism and Anarchism is that Marxism admits the necessity of the state during the transition from capitalism to Socialism; but (and here is where we differ from Kautsky and Co.) not the kind of state found in the usual, parliamentary, bourgeois, democratic republic, but rather something like the Paris Commune of 1871 and the Soviets of Workers' Deputies of 1905 and 1917.

There is a third reason: Life and the revolution have already established here in a concrete way (although in a form which is still weak and embryonic), this new type of "state," though it is not really a state in the proper sense of the word.

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It is now a question of the action of the masses and not merely of theories of leaders.

Essentially the state is the power exercised over the masses by a group of armed men separated from the people.

Our new state, which is now in process of being born, is also a real state, for we, too, need detachments of armed men; we, too, need the strictest order, and the ruthless crushing of all attempts at a tsarist as well as a Guchkov-bourgeois counter-revolution.

But our forming, new state is not yet a state in the proper sense of the word, for the detachments of armed men found in many parts of Russia are really the masses themselves, the people, and not simply privileged individuals, practically unremovable, placed above and separated from the people.

We ought to look forward, not backward; we ought to look away from the usual bourgeois type of democracy which has been strengthening the domination of the bourgeoisie by means of the old, monarchistic organs of government,—the police, the army, and the bureaucracy.

We must look forward to the advent of the newly born democracy, which is already ceasing to be a democracy, for democracy means the people's rule, while, obviously, an armed people could not rule over itself.

The word democracy is not only not scientific when applied to the Communist Party, but, since March, 1917, it has simply become a blinker placed upon the eyes of the revolutionary people, preventing the latter from establishing boldly, freely, and on its own initiative a new form of power: the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', etc., Deputies, as the sole power in the state and as the harbinger of the "withering away" of the state as such.

There is a fourth reason: We must take into account the objective international condition of Socialism.

Its condition is no longer what it was between the years 1871 and 1914, when Marx and Engels consciously allowed the inaccurate, opportunist term "Social-Democracy." For history proved that what was most needed in those days, *i. e.*, right after the defeat of the Paris Commune, was slow work of organisation and enlightenment. Nothing else was possible. The Anarchists were then, as they are now, theoretically, economically, and politically wrong. The Anarchists made a wrong estimate of the time, for they did not understand the world situation: the worker of England

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corrupted by imperialist profits, the Paris Commune destroyed; the bourgeois-national movement in Germany flushed with recent victory; and semi-feudal Russia still sleeping the sleep of centuries.

Marx and Engels gauged the hour accurately; they understood the international situation; they realised the need of a slow approach toward the beginning of the Social Revolution.

We, in turn, must understand the peculiarities and the tasks of the new epoch. Let us not imitate the woe-Marxians of whom Marx himself said: "I sowed dragons and I reaped fleas." *

The objective needs of capitalism which has grown into imperialism have brought forth the imperialist war. This war has brought mankind to the brink of a precipice, to the destruction of civilisation, the ruin and brutalisation of countless millions of human beings.

There is no other way out, except a proletarian revolution.

And just when that revolution is beginning, when it is taking its first awkward, timid, weak, unconscious steps, when it is still trusting the bourgeoisie, at that moment the majority (it is the truth, it is a fact) of the Social-Democratic leaders, of the Social-Democratic parliamentarians, of the Social-Democratic papers, in a word, all those who could spur the masses to action, or at least the majority of them, are betraying Socialism, are selling Socialism, are going to fight the battles of their national bourgeoisie.

The masses are distracted, baffled, deceived by their leaders.

And should we aid and abet that deception by retaining the old and worn-out party name, which is as decayed as the Second International?

It may be that many workers understand the meaning of Social-Democracy honestly. It is high time that we learn to distinguish between the objective and the subjective.

Subjectively, these workers, who are Social-Democrats, are the most loyal leaders of the proletarian masses.

Objectively, however, the world situation is such that the old name of our party helps to fool the masses and retard their onward march. Every day, in every paper, in every parliamentary group, the masses see leaders, *i. e.*, people whose voice carries far, whose acts are very much in evidence, who also call themselves Social-Democrats, who are "for unity" with the betrayers of

* An expression which Marx borrowed from Heine.—*Ed.*

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Socialism, the social-chauvinists, and they are trying to collect on the notes issued by Social-Democracy. . . .

Are there any reasons against the new name? We are told that one may confuse us with Anarchists-Communists.

Why are we not afraid of being confused with the Social-Nationalists, the Social-Liberals, the Radical-Socialists, the foremost, the most adroit bourgeois party in the French Republic at deceiving the masses? We are told: "The masses have grown used to the name, the workers have learned to love their Social-Democratic Party."

That is the only reason, but this reason goes counter to the teachings of Marxism, disregards the revolutionary tasks of tomorrow, the objective position of Socialism the world over, the shameful breakdown of the Second International, and the injury done to the cause by the pack of "also Social-Democrats" surrounding the proletarians.

This reason is based solely on laziness, somnolence, and love of routine.

We want to rebuild the world. We want to end this imperialist World War in which hundreds of millions of people are involved and billions of dollars are invested, a war which cannot be ended in a truly democratic way without the greatest proletarian revolution in history.

And here we are, afraid of our own shadow. Here we are, keeping on our backs the same old soiled shirt. . . .

It is high time to cast off the soiled shirt, it is high time to put on clean linen.

N. LENIN.

Petrograd, April 23, 1917.

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ON THE TASKS OF THE PROLETARIAT IN THE PRESENT REVOLUTION

As I only arrived in Petrograd on the night of April 16, I could, of course, only on my own responsibility and admittedly without sufficient preparation render a report on April 17 on the problems of the revolutionary proletariat.

The only thing I could do to facilitate matters for myself and for honest opponents was to prepare written theses. I read them, and gave the text to Comrade Tsereteli. I read them twice, very slowly: First at the meeting of the Bolsheviks, then at the joint meeting of Bolsheviks and Mensheviks.

I am publishing these personal theses, provided with very short explanatory notes, which were developed in more detail in the report:

Theses

1. In our attitude toward the war not the smallest concession must be made to "revolutionary defencism," for under the new government of Lvov and Co., owing to the capitalist nature of this government, the war on Russia's part remains a predatory imperialist war.

The class-conscious proletariat may give its consent to a revolutionary war, actually justifying revolutionary defencism, only on condition (a) that all power be transferred to the proletariat and its ally, the poorest section of the peasantry; (b) that all annexations be renounced in deeds, not merely in words; (c) that there be a complete break, in practice, with all interests of capital.

In view of the undoubted honesty of the mass of rank and file representatives of revolutionary defencism who accept the war only as a necessity and not as a means of conquest, in view of their being deceived by the bourgeoisie, it is necessary most thoroughly, persistently, patiently to explain to them their error, to explain the inseparable connection between capital and the imperialist war, to prove that without the overthrow of capital, it is *impossible* to

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conclude the war with a really democratic, non-oppressive peace.

This view is to be widely propagated among the army units in the field.

Fraternisation.

2. The peculiarity of the present situation in Russia is that it represents a *transition* from the first stage of the revolution, which, because of the inadequate organisation and insufficient class-consciousness of the proletariat, led to the assumption of power by the bourgeoisie—to its second stage which is to place power in the hands of the proletariat and the poorest strata of the peasantry.

This transition is characterised, on the one hand, by a maximum of legality (Russia is now the freest of all the belligerent countries of the world); on the other, by the absence of oppression of the masses, and, finally, by the trustingly ignorant attitude of the masses toward the capitalist government, the worst enemy of peace and Socialism.

This peculiar situation demands of us an ability to adapt ourselves to specific conditions of party work amidst vast masses of the proletariat just awakened to political life.

3. No support to the Provisional Government; exposure of the utter falsity of all its promises, particularly those relating to the renunciation of annexations. Unmasking, instead of admitting, the illusion-breeding "demand" that *this* government, a government of capitalists, cease being imperialistic.

4. Recognition of the fact that in most of the Soviets of Workers' Deputies our party constitutes a minority, and a small one at that, in the face of the *bloc* of all the petty-bourgeois opportunist elements from the People's Socialists, the Socialists-Revolutionists down to the Organisation Committee (Chkheidze, Tsereteli, etc., Steklov, etc., etc.) who have yielded to the influence of the bourgeoisie and have been extending this influence to the proletariat as well.

It must be explained to the masses that the Soviet of Workers' Deputies is the only possible form of revolutionary government and, therefore, our task is, while this government is submitting to the influence of the bourgeoisie, to present a patient, systematic, and persistent analysis of its errors and tactics, an analysis especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses.

While we are in the minority, we carry on the work of criticism and of exposing errors, advocating all along the necessity of transferring the entire power of state to the Soviets of Workers' Deputies,

so that the masses might learn from experience how to rid themselves of errors.

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5. Not a parliamentary republic—a return to it from the Soviet of Workers' Deputies would be a step backward—but a republic of Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies, throughout the land, from top to bottom.

Abolition of the police, the army, the bureaucracy.*

All officers to be elected and to be subject to recall at any time, their salaries not to exceed the average wage of a competent worker.

6. In the agrarian programme, the emphasis must be shifted to the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies.

Confiscation of all private lands.

Nationalisation of all lands in the country, and management of such lands by local Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' and Peasants' Deputies. A separate organisation of Soviets of Deputies of the poorest peasants. Creation of model agricultural establishments out of large estates (from 100 to 300 desiatinas, in accordance with local and other conditions and with the estimates of local institutions) under the control of the Soviet of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies, and at public expense.

7. Immediate merger of all the banks in the country into one general national bank, over which the Soviet of Workers' Deputies should have control.

8. Not the "introduction" of Socialism as an immediate task, but the immediate placing of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies in control of social production and distribution of goods.

9. Party tasks:

A. Immediate calling of a party convention.

B. Changing the party programme, mainly:

(1) Concerning imperialism and the imperialist war.

(2) Concerning our attitude toward the state and our demand for a "commune state." †

(3) Amending our antiquated minimum programme.

C. Changing the name of the party.‡

10. Rebuilding the International.

Taking the initiative in the creation of a revolutionary Inter-

* Substituting for the standing army the universal arming of the people.

† A state the model for which was given by the Paris Commune.

‡ Instead of "Social-Democracy," whose official leaders throughout the world have betrayed Socialism by going over to the bourgeoisie (defencists and vacillating Kautskians), we must call ourselves the *Communist Party.*

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national, an International against the social-chauvinists and against the "centre." *

In order that the reader may understand why I was compelled especially to emphasise, as a rare exception, the "case" of a conscientious opponent, I would ask him to compare the above theses with the following objection of Mr. Goldenberg: Lenin, he said, "has planted the banner of civil war in the midst of revolutionary democracy" (quoted in Mr. Plekhanov's *Yedinstvo*, No. 5).

Is this not a gem?

I write, read, and ruminate:

"In view of the undoubted honesty of the mass of rank and file representatives of 'revolutionary defencism' who accept the war only as a necessity and not as a means of conquest, in view of their being deceived by the bourgeoisie, it is necessary most thoroughly, persistently, patiently to explain to them their error."

The gentlemen of the bourgeoisie, however, who call themselves Social-Democrats, who belong neither to the masses nor to the rank and file representatives of defencism, have the insolence to present my views in such words: "Has planted (!) the banner (!) of civil war (of which there is not a word in the theses nor in my speech) in the midst (!!) of revolutionary democracy. . . ."

What is it? How does this differ from pogrom propaganda? From the *Russkaia Volia?*

I write, read, and ruminate:

"The Soviet of Workers' Deputies is the only possible form of revolutionary government, and therefore, our task is . . . to present a patient, systematic, and persistent analysis of its errors and tactics, an analysis especially adapted to the practical needs of the masses."

But opponents of a certain calibre present my views as a call to "civil war in the midst of revolutionary democracy"!!

I attacked the Provisional Government because it has not fixed a date for convoking the Constituent Assembly either in the near future or at any time at all, confining itself to vague promises. I proved that without the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies,

* The "centre" in the international Social-Democracy is the tendency vacillating between chauvinists ("defencists") and internationalists, *i. e.*, Kautsky and Co. in Germany, Longuet and Co. in France, Chkheidze and Co. in Russia, Turati and Co. in Italy, MacDonald and Co. in England, etc.

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the convocation of the Constituent Assembly is not guaranteed and its success impossible.

A view is attributed to me that I am opposed to the speediest convocation of the Constituent Assembly!!!

I would call these expressions "delirious," had not dozens of years of political fighting taught me to regard honesty in opponents as a rare exception.

In his paper Mr. Plekhanov called my speech "delirious." Very good, Mr. Plekhanov! But how awkward, uncouth, and slow-witted you are in your polemics! If I talked delirious stuff for two whole hours, why did an audience of hundreds tolerate this "delirium"? Further, why does your paper devote a whole column to reproducing this "delirium"? You have indeed made a bad shot in this matter!

It is, of course, much easier to shout, to scold, to rave than to make an attempt to relate, to explain, to recall how Marx and Engels in 1871, 1872, and 1875 viewed the experience of the Paris Commune and the kind of state the proletariat needs.

The former Marxist, Mr. Plekhanov, probably does not wish to think about Marxism.

I quoted the words of Rosa Luxemburg, who, on August 4, 1914, called the *German* Social-Democracy a "stinking corpse." Messrs. Plekhanov, Goldenberg and Co., however, feel "offended" . . . for whom?—for the German chauvinists who have been called chauvinists!

They have lost their way, these poor Russian social-chauvinists, Socialists in words and chauvinists in deeds.

N. LENIN.

Pravda, No. 26, April 20, 1917.

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LETTERS ON TACTICS

FOREWORD

On April 17, 1917, I was called upon to report on the subject indicated in the title, first, at a meeting of Bolsheviks in Petrograd. These were delegates to the All-Russian Conference of Workers' and Soldiers' Soviets, who had to leave for their homes and could not allow me to postpone it. At the close of the meeting, the chairman, Comrade G. Zinoviev, suggested in the name of the whole assembly that I repeat my report at the joint meeting of Bolshevik and Menshevik delegates, who wished to consider the question of unifying the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party.

Difficult though it was for me immediately to repeat my report, I felt that I had no right to decline once it was demanded by comrades of my persuasion as well as by the Mensheviks, who, because of their impending departure, really could not grant me a respite.

In giving my report, I read the theses which were published in No. 26 of the *Pravda*, on April 20.*

Both the theses and my report created discord among the Bolsheviks themselves and the staff of the *Pravda*. After a number of consultations, we unanimously concluded that it would be expedient openly to discuss our differences, thus providing material for the All-Russian Conference of our party (the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, united under the Central Committee) which is to meet in Petrograd on May 3.

Complying with this decision concerning a discussion, I am publishing the following letters in which I do not pretend to have made an exhaustive study of the question, but wish only to outline the principal arguments, especially those essential for the *practical* tasks of the working-class movement.

AN ESTIMATE OF THE PRESENT SITUATION

Marxism demands of us a most exact, an objectively verifiable analysis of the interrelations of classes and of the concrete peculi-

* See pp. 32-36.—*Ed.*

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liarities of each historic moment. The Bolsheviks have always tried to be true to this demand, which is absolutely imperative from the standpoint of giving a scientific foundation to politics.

"Our doctrine is not a dogma, but a guide to action," said Marx and Engels, who always scorned the mere acquisition and repetition of "formulæ," capable at best only of outlining *general* tasks, which are necessarily changed by the concrete economic and political circumstances of each particular period in the historical process.

What, then, are the clearly established objective facts by which the party of the revolutionary proletariat must be guided now in defining the tasks and forms of its activity?

In my first "Letter from Afar" ("The First Stage of the First Revolution") which was published in Nos. 14 and 15 of the *Pravda*, April 3 and 4, 1917,* and in my theses, I define the "peculiarity of the present moment" in Russia as a period of transition from the first stage of the revolution to the second. I therefore considered the basic slogan, the "order of the day" at that time to be: "Workers, you have displayed marvels of proletarian and popular heroism in the civil war against tsarism; you must display marvels of proletarian and nation-wide organisation in order to prepare your victory in the second stage of the revolution" (*Pravda*, No. 15).

What, then, is the first stage?

It is the passing of state power to the bourgeoisie.

Before the March revolution of 1917, state power in Russia was in the hands of one old class, namely, the feudal noble landlord class, headed by Nicholas Romanov.

After that revolution, state power is in the hands of another class, a new one, namely, the *bourgeoisie*.

The passing of state power from one class to another is the first, the main, the basic principle of a revolution, both in the strictly scientific and in the practical political meaning of that term.

To that extent, the bourgeois, or the bourgeois-democratic, revolution in Russia is *completed*.

But at this point we hear the noise of objectors, who readily call themselves "old Bolsheviks": Haven't we always maintained, they say, that a bourgeois-democratic revolution is culminated only in a "revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry"? Is the agrarian revolution, which is a phase of the bourgeois-demo-

* See V. I. Lenin, *Letters from Afar*, Little Lenin Library, Vol. 8.—*Ed.*

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cratic revolution, completed? On the contrary, is it not a fact that it has not yet begun?

My answer is: The Bolshevik slogans and ideas have been generally confirmed by history; but as to the concrete situation, things have turned out to be different, more original, more unique, more multicoloured than could have been anticipated by any one.

To ignore, to forget, this fact would mean to resemble those "old Bolsheviks" who more than once have played a sorry part in the history of our party when they repeated a formula, once acquired, without thinking, instead of studying the peculiarities of new living reality.

"The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" has already become a reality* in the Russian Revolution, for this "formula" foresees only the interrrelation of classes, but it does not foresee the concrete political institutions which realise this interrelation, this co-operation. "The Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies"—here you have "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" already realised in life.

This formula has become antiquated. Life brought it out of the realm of formulæ into the realm of reality, clothed it with flesh and blood, concretised it and thus changed it.

There is a new, a different task before us now: the split *within* this dictatorship between the proletarian elements (the anti-defencist, internationalist, "communist" elements who stand for the transition to the commune) and the petty-proprietor or petty-bourgeois elements (Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov, the Socialists-Revolutionists and other revolutionary defencists, opponents of the movement toward the commune, adherents of "supporting" the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois government).

He who *now* speaks of "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" only, is behind the times, is therefore in practice on the side of the petty bourgeoisie and against the proletarian class struggle; such a one should be placed in the archive of "Bolshevik" pre-revolutionary antiques (it may be called the archive of "old Bolsheviks").

Revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry has already been realised, but in a very original way, with a number of extremely important modifications. I will deal with

* In a certain form and to a certain extent.

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them separately, in one of my letters. Now, however, it is necessary to acquire that incontestable truth that a Marxist must take cognisance of living life, of the true facts of reality, that he must not continue clinging to the theory of yesterday, which, like every theory, at best only outlines the main and the general, only approximately embracing the complexity of life.

"Theory, my friend, is grey, but green is the eternal tree of life."

Whoever questions the "completeness" of the bourgeois revolution from the old viewpoint, sacrifices living Marxism to a dead letter.

According to the old conception, the rule of the proletariat and peasantry, their dictatorship, can and must follow the rule of the bourgeoisie.

In real life, however, things have already turned out otherwise; an extremely original, new, unprecedented interlocking of one and the other has taken place. Side by side, together and simultaneously, we have both the rule of the bourgeoisie (the government of Lvov and Guchkov) and the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, which *voluntarily* cedes power to the bourgeoisie and voluntarily makes itself an appendage of the bourgeoisie.

For it must not be forgotten that in Petrograd the power is actually in the hands of the workers and soldiers; the new government does not use violence against them, and cannot do so, because there is no police, there is no army separated from the people, there is no all-powerful officialdom placed above the people. This is a fact. It is the kind of fact that characterises a state of the type of the Paris Commune. This fact does not fit into the old framework of thought. One ought to be able to adapt the framework to life, rather than repeat the new senseless words about "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" *in general*.

Let us approach the question from another angle, in order to throw more light on it.

A Marxist must not leave the firm ground of the analysis of class relations. Power is in the hands of the bourgeoisie. But how about the mass of the peasants? Does it not *also* form a bourgeoisie, only of a different social stratum, of a different kind, of a different character? Wherefrom does it follow that *this* stratum cannot come into power, thus "completing" the bourgeois-democratic revolution? Why should this be impossible?

This is how the old Bolsheviks often argue.

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My reply is that it is fully possible. But, in analysing a given situation, a Marxist must proceed not from the possible, but from the real.

Reality, however, shows us that the freely elected Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies freely enter the second, the parallel government, freely supplementing, developing and completing it. And just as freely do they *give away* their power to the bourgeoisie, which phenomenon does not in the least "undermine" the theory of Marxism, for we have always known and have repeatedly pointed out that the bourgeoisie maintains itself not only by force but also by the lack of class-consciousness, the clinging to old habits, the timidity, the lack of organisation on the part of the masses.

Now, in the face of this reality of to-day, it would be simply ridiculous to turn away from the fact and to speak of "possibilities."

It is possible that the peasantry might seize all the land and all the power. Not only do I not forget this possibility, not only do I not confine myself to the present, but I definitely and clearly formulate the agrarian programme considering the new phenomenon, *i. e.*, the deep chasm between the agricultural labourers and the poorest peasants on the one hand and the peasant landowners on the other hand.

Something else is possible, however; it is possible that the peasants will listen to the advice of the petty-bourgeois party of the Socialists-Revolutionists that has yielded to the influence of the bourgeoisie, that has gone over to defencism and that advises waiting for the Constituent Assembly, although not even the date of its convocation has so far been set.*

It is possible that the peasants will adhere to and prolong their pact with the bourgeoisie, which they have concluded now through the medium of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, not only in form, but in deed.

Many things are possible. It would be the greatest mistake were we to forget the agrarian movement and the agrarian programme. But it would be equally wrong to forget the reality which shows us the fact of an agreement—or, to use a more exact, less legal, and

* Lest my words be misinterpreted, I will anticipate at once: I am absolutely in favour of the Soviets of Agricultural Labourers and Peasants immediately taking possession of all the land, on condition that they themselves should preserve the strictest order and discipline, not permitting the least injury to machines, buildings, and live stock, in no way disorganising agriculture and the production of bread stuffs, but increasing them, for the soldiers need twice as much bread, and the people must not starve.

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more economic, class expression—the fact of *class collaboration* between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry.

When this fact ceases to be a fact, when the peasantry has separated itself from the bourgeoisie, when it has seized the land and power against the bourgeoisie—then there will be a new stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution; and of that it will be necessary to speak separately.

A Marxist who, in view of the possibility of such a future stage, were to forget his duty at the present time when the peasantry is in agreement with the bourgeoisie, would turn petty-bourgeois. For he would in practice be preaching to the proletariat confidence in the petty bourgeoisie ("this petty bourgeoisie, this peasantry, must separate itself from the bourgeoisie within the scope of the bourgeois-democratic revolution"). This would mean that for the sake of the "possibility" of a pleasant and sweet future, in which the peasantry would not form the tail of the bourgeoisie, in which the Socialists-Revolutionists, Chkheidze, Tsereteli and Steklov would not be an appendage of the bourgeois government,—that for the sake of the "possibility" of a pleasant future he would forget the unpleasant present in which the peasantry forms for the time being the tail of the bourgeoisie, in which the Socialists-Revolutionists and the Social-Democrats do not, for the time being, give up the rôle of an appendage of the bourgeois government, of the opposition of "His Majesty" Lvov.

This hypothetical person would resemble a saccharine Louis Blanc,* a sugary Kautskian, but in no way a revolutionary Marxist.

But are we not in danger of falling into subjectivism, of wanting to "skip" the bourgeois-democratic revolution—which has not yet been completed and has not gone through the peasant movement—and thus to arrive at the Socialist revolution?

This danger might threaten me, were I to say: "No Tsar, but a workers' government." But I have not said this, I have said something else. I have said that there can be no other government (barring a bourgeois one) in Russia except that of the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. I have said that, at present, power in Russia can pass from the Guchkovs and Lvovs *only* to these Soviets, in which it so happens that the majority are peasants, the majority are soldiers, the majority

* A French reformist Socialist who sided with the oppressors of the Paris Commune.—*Ed.*

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are petty-bourgeois, using a scientific Marxian term, using not an everyday, philistine, professional, but a class characterisation.

In my theses, I have absolutely insured myself against any skipping of the peasant and other petty-bourgeois movements which are still in existence, against any *playing* with the "conquest of power" by a workers' government, against any kind of Blanquist * adventure, for I directly referred to the experiences of the Paris Commune. This experience, as is well known, and as was pointed out by Marx in 1871 and Engels in 1891, absolutely excluded Blanquism, absolutely secured direct, immediate and absolute rule of the *majority* and the activity of the masses only to the extent of the *conscious* action of the majority.

In the theses, I most definitely reduced the question to a struggle for influence within the Soviets of Workers', Agricultural Labourers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. In order to leave no trace of a doubt in this respect, I twice emphasised in the theses the necessity of patient, persistent work of "explaining," adapted to "the practical needs of the masses."

Ignorant persons or renegades from Marxism, such as Mr. Plekhanov and his ilk, may clamour about Anarchism, Blanquism, etc. Any one who wants to think and learn cannot fail to understand that Blanquism is seizure of power by a minority, whereas the Soviets of Workers' Deputies are admittedly the direct and immediate organisation of the majority of the people. Work reduced to a struggle for influence within such Soviets cannot, really cannot, drift into the swamp of Blanquism. It cannot drift into the swamp of Anarchism either, for Anarchism is a denial of the necessity of the state and state power for the epoch of transition from the rule of the bourgeoisie to the rule of the proletariat. Whereas I advocate, with a clearness that excludes any misunderstanding, the necessity of the state for this epoch, but, in accordance with Marx and with the experience of the Paris Commune, I advocate not the usual parliamentary bourgeois state, but a state without a standing army, without a police placed in opposition to the people, without an officialdom placed above the people.

When Mr. Plekhanov, in the newspaper *Yedinstvo*, inveighs with

* The teachings of the French revolutionist Auguste Blanqui (1805-1881) favouring the overthrow of the ruling power through secret plots of a few revolutionists rather than through preparation and organisation of the masses led by a revolutionary party.—*Ed.*

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all his might against Anarchism, he only gives futher evidence of his breach with Marxism. In reply to my challenge in the *Pravda* (No. 26) that he relate what Marx and Engels taught about the state in the years 1871, 1872, 1875, Plekhanov can only answer with silence regarding the substance of the question and with a storm of abuse in the spirit of the embittered bourgeoisie.

Mr. Plekhanov, the ex-Marxist, has absolutely failed to understand the doctrine of Marxism about the state. Indeed, germs of this lack of understanding are also to be found in his German brochure on Anarchism.

Let us now see how Comrade L. Kamenev formulates his "disagreements" with my theses and with the above-expressed views in his short article in No. 27 of the *Pravda*. This will help us to clarify them with more exactness.

"As regards Comrade Lenin's general line," writes Comrade Kamenev, "it appears to us unacceptable, inasmuch as it proceeds from the assumption that the bourgeois-democratic revolution has been completed, and it builds on the immediate transformation of this revolution into a Socialist revolution."

There are two major errors in this.

1. The question of a "completed" bourgeois-democratic revolution is stated wrongly. The question is put in an abstract, simple, if we may say so, monochromatic way, which does not correspond to the objective reality. Any one who puts the question in this way, who *now* asks whether the bourgeois-democratic revolution has been completed, and nothing further, deprives himself of the possibility of seeing the extraordinarily complicated actuality which has at least two colours. This—in theory. In practice, he capitulates feebly to petty-bourgeois revolutionism.

As a matter of fact, reality shows us both the passing of the power into the hands of the bourgeoisie (a "completed" bourgeois-democratic revolution of the ordinary type) and, by the side of the actual government, the existence of a parallel government which represents the "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry." This latter "also government" has itself ceded power to the bourgeoisie, has voluntarily chained itself to the bourgeois government.

Is this reality embraced in the old Bolshevik formula of Comrade

Kamenev which says that "the bourgeois-democratic revolution is not completed"?

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No, the formula is antiquated. It does not apply. It is dead. Attempts to revive it will be in vain.

2. A practical question. Who knows whether it is possible at present for a special "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry," detached from the bourgeois government, to exist in Russia? Marxian tactics must not be based on the unknown.

But if this is possible after all, then there is one, and only one way toward it, namely, a direct, resolute, irrevocable separation of the proletarian Communist elements from the petty-bourgeois elements.

Why?

Because the whole petty bourgeoisie has, not by chance but of necessity, turned towards chauvinism (defencism), towards "supporting" the bourgeoisie, towards depending on it, towards the fear of not getting on without it, etc.

How can the petty bourgeoisie be "pushed" into power, when this petty bourgeoisie could seize power *now*, but would not?

Only by separating the proletarian, the Communist Party, through proletarian class struggle free from the timidity of those petty-bourgeois, only by consolidating the proletarians who are free from the influence of the petty bourgeoisie in deed and not only in word—can one make things so "hot" for the petty bourgeoisie that, in certain circumstances, it will have to seize power; it is not even out of the question that Guchkov and Miliukov—again in certain circumstances —should stand for all power given solely to Chkheidze, Tsereteli, the Socialists-Revolutionists, Steklov, because after all they are all "defencists."

Any one who, right now, immediately and irrevocably, separates the proletarian elements of the Soviets (*i. e.*, the proletarian Communist Party) from the petty-bourgeois elements, provides a correct expression of the interests of the movement for either one of the two possible cases: for the case when Russia still goes through a special "dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" independently of the bourgeoisie, and for the case when the petty bourgeoisie is not able to detach itself from the bourgeoisie and swings eternally (that is until Socialism is established) between us and it. Any one who is guided in his activities by the simple formula, "the

bourgeois-democratic revolution is not completed," vouchsafes, as it were, the certainty of the petty bourgeoisie being independent of the bourgeoisie. In doing so, he at once helplessly surrenders to the petty bourgeoisie.

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Apropos: With regard to the "formula" of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, I would recall that, in my article "Two Tactics" (July, 1905) I specially emphasized (*Twelve Years*, p. 435):

> The revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry has, like everything else in the world, a past and a future. Its past is absolutism, feudalism, monarchy, privileges. . . . Its future—the struggle against private property, the struggle of the wage-earners against the employers, the struggle for Socialism. . . .

The mistake made by Comrade Kamenev is that in 1917 he only sees the past of the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. In reality, however, its future has already begun, for the interests and the policy of the wage-earners and the petty proprietors have already taken different lines, and that in such an important question as "defencism," the attitude toward the imperialist war.

This brings me to the second mistake in the remarks of Comrade Kamenev quoted above: He reproaches me, saying that my line "builds" on "the immediate transformation of this (bourgeois-democratic) revolution into a Socialist revolution."

This is not true. Not only do I not "build" on the "immediate transformation" of our revolution into a Socialist one, but I actually caution against it, when in Thesis No. 8, I state: "Not the 'introduction' of Socialism as an immediate task. . . ."

Is it not clear that any one who builds on the immediate transformation of our revolution into a Socialist one could not oppose the immediate task of introducing Socialism?

More than that. It is not even possible to introduce in Russia "immediately" a "commune state" (*i. e.*, a state organised according to the type of the Paris Commune), because for that it would be necessary that the majority of the Deputies in all (or in most) Soviets should clearly recognise the entire erroneousness and harm of the tactics and policy of the Socialists-Revolutionists, Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov, etc. Whereas I declared in plain language that in this respect I only build on "patient" explaining (is it necessary to be patient to bring about a change which can be realised "immediately"?).

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Comrade Kamenev has made an rather "impatient" start; he has repeated the bourgeois prejudice against the Paris Commune, namely, that it wanted to introduce Socialism "immediately." This is not true. The Commune, unfortunately, hesitated too long over the introduction of Socialism. The real essence of the Commune is not where the bourgeois usually look for it, but in the creation of a state of a special type. A state of this kind has already been born in Russia, it is the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies!

Comrade Kamenev has not grasped the fact, the significance of the existing Soviets, their identity, as to their socio-political character, with the Commune state; instead of studying the fact, he began to discuss what, in his opinion, I consider as the "immediate" future. The result is, unfortunately, a repetition of the method of many bourgeois: from the question as to what the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies are, whether they represent a higher type than a parliamentary republic, whether they are more useful for the people, more democratic, more adapted to the struggle, for instance, against the lack of bread, etc.,—from this urgent, real question raised by life itself, attention is diverted to the empty, allegedly scientific, in reality hollow, professionally lifeless question of "building on an immediate transformation."

An idle question put in the wrong way. I "build" only on this, exclusively on this—that the workers, soldiers and peasants will deal better than the officials, better than the police, with the practical, difficult problems of increasing the production of foodstuffs, their better distribution, the more satisfactory provisioning of the soldiers, etc., etc.

I am deeply convinced that the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will make the independent activity of the people a reality more quickly and effectively than will a parliamentary republic (I will compare the two types of state in greater detail in another letter). They will more effectively, more practically and more correctly decide what steps can be taken toward Socialism and how these steps should be taken. Control over a bank, amalgamation of all banks into one, is not yet Socialism, but it is a step toward Socialism. To-day such steps are being taken in Germany by the Junkers and the bourgeoisie against the people. To-morrow the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies will be able to take these steps more effectively to the advantage of the people when the whole state power will be in its hands.

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What compels the taking of such steps?

Famine. Economic disorganisation. Imminent collapse. War horrors. Horrors of the wounds inflicted on mankind by the war.

Comrade Kamenev concludes his article with the remark that "in a broad discussion he hopes to carry his point of view as the only possible one for revolutionary Social-Democracy in so far as it wishes to be and must remain to the very end the one and only party of the revolutionary masses of the proletariat without turning into a group of Communist propagandists."

It seems to me that these words betray a completely erroneous estimate of the situation. Comrade Kamenev contrasts a "party of the masses" with a "group of propagandists." Still, just now the "masses" have yielded to the frenzy of "revolutionary" defencism. Is it not more worthy of internationalists at this moment to be able to resist "mass" frenzy rather than to "wish to remain" with the masses, *i. e.*, to yield to the general epidemic? Have we not witnessed how in all the belligerent countries of Europe, the chauvinists justified themselves by their wish to "remain with the masses"? Is it not our duty to be able to remain for a while in the minority against a "mass" frenzy? Is not the work of the propagandists at the present moment the very central issue, since it tends to clear the proletarian line from the defencist and petty-bourgeois "mass" frenzy? It was just this fusion of the masses, proletarian and non-proletarian, without distinction of class differences inside of the masses, that formed one of the conditions for the defencist epidemic. To speak with contempt of a "group of propagandists" advocating a *proletarian* line does not seem to be very becoming.

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WILL THE BOLSHEVIKS RETAIN STATE POWER?

BY

V. I. LENIN

MARTIN LAWRENCE, LTD.
LONDON

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LENIN was consciously and deliberately preparing the Bolshevik Party for the overthrow of the Kerensky régime and the transfer of power to the Soviets, which were rapidly changing their composition and becoming Bolshevik Soviets. His letter to the leading committees of the Bolshevik Party written September 25-27th and reprinted at the beginning of this booklet, places the question of the uprising definitely on the order of the day. The process of *proving* to the workers, of *convincing* them of the correctness of the Bolshevik analysis of the situation and the proposed program of action—a procedure which Lenin advised at the outset—was being completed with the aid of the events which transpired from March to September. The masses were showing their grasp of the situation by deserting the petty-bourgeois parties (Socialist-Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, etc.), by acclaiming the Bolshevik slogans, by voting for Bolsheviks to the Soviets in larger and larger numbers.

Realising the certainty with which the Bolsheviks were marching toward the decisive struggle for power, the various petty-bourgeois parties, and particularly the group which claimed to stand in close proximity to the Bolsheviks (the group represented by the *Novaya Zhizn*, published by Gorky) were warning the Bolsheviks against "endangering the revolution." Two main questions were raised by them which had to be disposed of: Will the Bolsheviks dare to attempt to take power, and if they do and succeed in taking power, will they be able to hold it? These questions were completely answered in the essay "Will the Bolsheviks Retain State Power."

Lenin goes hammer and tongs after those whom he derisively called "quarter Bolsheviks," smashing their arguments one after another. The workers are isolated from the rest of the population, the new power could not withstand the opposition which will be marshalled against them—were the chief obstacles which the Bolsheviks could not overcome, according to the leaders of the *Novaya Zhizn* group, whom Lenin designated as "lawyers of the bourgeoisie." Fact by fact, argument by argument, Lenin builds up his case against the "quarter Bolsheviks" and all those faint of heart and blurred of vision. The demands for land for the peasants, freedom for the subject nationalities and the universal urge for peace, made the struggle of the workers and poor peasants a common one. The experience of putting down the Kornilov counter-revolution was a dress rehearsal and augured well for the ability of the masses to deal with any counter-revolution which might raise its head, and later history proved this contention to the hilt.

ALEXANDER TRACHTENBERG.

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THE BOLSHEVIKS MUST ASSUME POWER

LETTER TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE, THE PETROGRAD AND MOSCOW COMMITTEES OF THE RUSSIAN SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY

HAVING obtained a majority in the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of both capitals, the Bolsheviks can and must take power into their hands.

They can do so because the active majority of the revolutionary elements of the people of both capitals is sufficient to attract the masses, to overcome the resistance of the adversary, to vanquish him, to conquer power and to retain it. For, in offering immediately a democratic peace, in giving the land immediately to the peasants, in re-establishing the democratic institutions and liberties which have been mangled and crushed by Kerensky, the Bolsheviks will form a government which *nobody* will overthrow.

The majority of the people is *with* us. This has been proven by the long and difficult road from May 19 to August 12 and September 25: the majority in the Soviets of the capitals is the *result* of the people's progress *to our side*. The vacillation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and the strengthening of internationalists among them, is proof of the same thing.

The Democratic Conference * does *not* represent the majority of the revolutionary people, but *only the conciliatory petty-bourgeois top layer*. One must not let himself be deceived by the election figures; elections are not everything: compare the elections to the city councils of Petrograd and Moscow with the elections to the Soviets. Compare the elections in Moscow with the strike of August 25. Here we have objective data as regards the majority of the revolutionary elements that lead the masses.

The Democratic Conference deceives the peasantry without giving it either peace or land.

The Bolshevik government *alone* will satisfy the peasantry.

* Called by the Kerensky government for September 27 in the attempt to secure a broader base among the petty bourgeoisie following the Kornilov revolt.—*Ed.*

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Why must the Bolsheviks assume power right *now?*

Because the impending surrender of Petrograd will make our chances a hundred times worse.

But to prevent the surrender of Petrograd while the army is headed by Kerensky and Co. is not in our power.

To "wait" for the Constituent Assembly would be wrong. By surrendering Petrograd, Kerensky and Co. can always *destroy* the Constituent Assembly. Only our party, having assumed power, can secure the convocation of the Constituent Assembly; and, after assuming power, it could blame the other parties for delaying it and could substantiate its accusations.

A separate peace between the English and German imperialists must and can be prevented, but only by quick action.

The people are tired of the vacillations of the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s. Only our victory in the capitals will draw the peasants after us.

What we are concerned with is not the "day" of the uprising, not the "moment" of the uprising in the narrow sense of the word. This will be decided by the common voice of those who are in contact with the workers and soldiers, with the *masses.*

What matters is that now, at the Democratic Conference, our party has practically *its own congress,* and this congress must (whether it wishes to do so or not) decide the *fate of the revolution.*

What matters is that we must make the *task* clear to the party, place on the order of the day the *armed uprising* in Petrograd and Moscow (including their regions), the conquest of power, the overthrow of the government. We must think of *how* to make propaganda in favour of this without committing ourselves in the press.

We must recall and ponder the words of Marx on uprising: "*Uprising is an art,*" etc.

It would be naive to wait for a "formal" majority on the side of the Bolsheviks; no revolution ever waits for *this.* Kerensky and Co. are not waiting either, but are preparing the surrender of Petrograd. It is just the miserable vacillations of the Democratic Conference that must and will cause the patience of the workers of Petrograd and Moscow to end in a violent outburst! History will not forgive us if we do not assume power now.

No apparatus? There is an apparatus: the Soviets and democratic

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organisations. The international situation *just now*, on the *eve* of a separate peace between the English and the Germans, is *in our favour*. It is precisely now that to offer peace to the peoples means to *win*.

Assume power at once in Moscow and in Petrograd (it does not matter which begins; perhaps even Moscow may begin); we will win *absolutely and unquestionably*.

N. LENIN.

Written September 25-27, 1917.
First published in the magazine *Proletarskaya Revolyutsiya*, No. 2, 1921.

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WILL THE BOLSHEVIKS RETAIN STATE POWER?

WHAT is it upon which all political tendencies are agreed, from the *Ryech* to the *Novaya Zhizn* inclusive, from the Cadet-Kornilovists * to the semi-Bolsheviks, *all* except the Bolsheviks?

It is the conviction that either the Bolsheviks alone will never decide to take all state power into their hands or, if they do decide and take it, they will be incapable of retaining it for any length of time.

Lest any one say that the question of the assumption of all state power by the Bolsheviks alone is a question of no political reality whatsoever, that only the gross conceit of some "fanatic" can consider it to have reality, we shall forestall such an assertion by quoting the exact declarations of the most responsible and influential political parties and tendencies of various "hues."

But first a word or two regarding the first question: will the Bolsheviks decide to take all state power into their own hands alone? I have already had occasion to reply to this question with a categorical affirmative at the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, in a remark I managed to shout from my seat during one of Tsereteli's ministerial speeches. And I have met no declaration by the Bolsheviks, either in the press or verbal, that we must not assume power alone. I still maintain the view that a political party in general, and the party of the advanced class in particular, would have no right to existence, would be unworthy of being considered a party, would be a pitiable cipher in every sense, were it to refuse power once there is a possibility of obtaining it.

Let us now quote the assertions of the Cadets, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the semi-Bolsheviks (I would rather say quarter-Bolsheviks) on the question under discussion.

Editorial in the *Ryech*, September 29:

> Discord and confusion reigned in the hall of the Alexandrinsky Theatre and the Socialist press reflects the same picture. Only the views of the Bol-

* Cadet—abbreviated name of the bourgeois Constitutional-Democratic Party; Kornilovists—inspirers and supporters of the counter-revolution led by General Kornilov.—*Ed.*

sheviks are characterised by their definiteness and directness. At the conference, these are the views of the minority. In the Soviets, this is an ever increasing trend. But in spite of all their fulmination, their bragging, their demonstration of self-confidence, the Bolsheviks, with the exception of a few fanatics, are brave only in words. They would not attempt to take "all power" of their own accord. Disorganisers and disrupters *par excellence*, they are actually cowards; in their heart of hearts they understand quite well both their personal ignorance and the ephemeral nature of their present successes. They know, just as well as we all do, that the first day of their final triumph would also be the first day of their headlong fall. Irresponsible in their very nature, anarchists in method and practice, they are conceivable only as one of the lines of political thought, or, more correctly, as one of its aberrations. The best means of getting rid of Bolshevism for many years to come, or of destroying it, would be to entrust its leaders with the fate of the country. And were it not for the consciousness of the inadmissible and disastrous nature of such experiments, one might, in despair, decide even on such an heroic step. Happily, we repeat, these dismal heroes of the day do not themselves really aim at the seizure of complete power. Under no conditions can constructive work be accessible to them. Thus all their definiteness and directness are limited to the sphere of the political platform, to verbal efforts at meetings. For practical purposes, their position cannot be taken into account from any point of view. However, in one respect it has a certain practical result: it unites all other shades of "Socialist thought" in a negative attitude towards it. . . .

This is how the Cadets argue. And here is the point of view of the largest "ruling and governing" party in Russia, the "Socialist-Revolutionaries," also in an unsigned, and therefore editorial, article of their official organ, *Dyelo Naroda*, October 4:

Should the bourgeoisie be unwilling to work together with the democracy on the basis of the platform laid down by the conference, pending the convocation of the Constituent Assembly, then *the coalition must arise from within the conference itself.* This is a great sacrifice on the part of the defenders of the coalition, *but even the propagandists of the idea of a "clear line" of power must agree to this.* We are afraid, however, that no agreement may be reached, either. Then there remains a third and last combination. That section of the conference which *on principle* defended the idea of homogeneity of power, has the *duty* to organise a government.

Let us say it definitely: *the Bolsheviks will be obliged to form a cabinet.* With the greatest energy they have been inculcating revolutionary democracy with hatred of the coalition, promising it every blessing once "conciliationism" is abandoned, and blaming on the latter all the misfortunes of the country.

If they have really understood what they were doing with their *agitation*, if they have *not been deceiving the masses, they are in duty bound* to pay the promissory notes they handed out right and left.

The question is clear.

Let them not make any useless efforts to hide behind hastily concocted theories of the impossibility of their taking power.

Democracy will accept no such theories.

At the same time, the advocates of coalition must guarantee them full support. These are the three combinations, the three ways that are open to us—there are no others. [The italics are the *Dyelo Naroda's.*]

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Thus the S.-R.'s. Here is their "position"—if the attempt to sit between two stools can be called a position—of the *Novaya Zhizn*-ist quarter-Bolsheviks, taken from the leading article in the *Novaya Zhizn*, October 6:

If the coalition with Konovalov and Kishkin is again formed, then it will mean nothing but a new capitulation of democracy and the rejection of the resolution of the conference regarding a responsible government on the basis of the platform of August 27. . . .*

A homogeneous cabinet of Mensheviks and S.-R.'s will be as little able to feel its responsibility as did the responsible Socialist Ministers in the coalition cabinet. . . . Such a government would not only be incapable of rallying around itself the "live forces" of the revolution, but it could not even count on any active support from the vanguard of the proletariat.

Still, the formation of another type of homogeneous cabinet, a government of the "proletariat and the poorest peasantry," would be, not a better, but a much worse way out of the situation—in fact, not a way out at all, but simply a catastrophe. Such a slogan, it is true, is not advanced by any one except in occasional, timid, and subsequently systematically "explained" remarks of the *Rabochy Put*. [This glaring untruth is written "bravely" by responsible publicists, forgetting even the editorial of the *Dyelo Naroda* of October 4.]

The Bolsheviks have now formally revived the slogan, "All Power to the Soviets." This slogan was dropped when, after the July days, the Soviets, through the Central Executive Committee, definitely began to pursue an active anti-Bolshevik policy. Now, however, the "Soviet line" may not only be considered to have become straightened out, but there is every reason to assume that the proposed Congress of Soviets will yield a Bolshevik majority. Under such conditions the slogan, "All Power to the Soviets," revived by the Bolsheviks, is a "tactical line" directed towards the dictatorship of the proletariat and the "poorest peasantry." True, by Soviets are also meant the Soviets of Peasant Deputies, and thus the Bolshevik slogan presupposes a power resting on the overwhelming majority of the whole democracy of Russia. But in this case the slogan, "All Power to the Soviets," loses all its special meaning, since the Soviets are thus made almost identical in their composition with the "pre-parliament"** formed by the conference. . . .

This statement of the *Novaya Zhizn* is a most shameless lie, and amounts to declaring that a falsified, a counterfeit democracy is "almost identical" with democracy. The pre-parliament is only a falsification, presenting the will of the minority of the people—particularly that of Kuskova, Berkenheim, Tchaikovsky and Co.—as if it were the will of the majority. That, in the first place. Secondly, even the peasant Soviets, faked by the Avksentyevs and Tchaikovskys, yielded such a high percentage of opponents to the coalition in the conference that together with the Soviets of Workers'

* The platform of "revolutionary democracy," enunciated at the State Conference in Moscow by Menshevik leaders.—*Ed.*

** Provisional Council of the Russian Republic decided upon by the Democratic Conference to serve as a representative body till the convocation of the Constituent Assembly.—*Ed.*

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and Soldiers' Deputies there would have been an *absolute collapse of the coalition.* And thirdly, "Power to the Soviets" means that the power of the peasant Soviets would largely spread over the villages, and in these a majority of the *poorest* peasantry is assured.

If it is one and the same thing, then the Bolshevik slogan must be removed from the political arena without delay. If, however, "Power to the Soviets" only conceals dictatorship of the proletariat, then such a power would but signify the collapse and wreck of the revolution.

Is it necessary to prove that the proletariat, isolated not only from the other classes of the country but from the really living forces of the democracy, will not be able either technically to get hold of the state apparatus and to set it in motion under the exceptionally complicated circumstances, or politically to resist all the pressure of hostile forces, which will sweep away not only the dictatorship of the proletariat but the whole revolution as well?

The only power answering the requirements of the moment is a really honest coalition within the democracy.

We apologise to the reader for the long quotations, but they were absolutely necessary. It was necessary to present an exact view of the position of the various parties hostile to the Bolsheviks. It was necessary to definitely reveal the highly important circumstance that *all* these parties have admitted the question of the seizure of complete state power by the Bolsheviks alone to be not only a question of political reality, but also a very urgent question of the day.

Let us now pass to an analysis of the reasons on the strength of which "all," from the Cadets to the *Novaya Zhizn*-ists, are convinced that the Bolsheviks cannot retain power.

The sedate *Ryech* presents no arguments at all. It merely pours out on the Bolsheviks streams of the choicest and most irate abuse. The quotation cited by us shows, among other things, how very wrong it would be to think that the *Ryech* is cunningly "provoking" the Bolsheviks into seizing power and that therefore: "Be careful, comrades, since what the enemy advises must certainly be dangerous!" If, instead of realistically taking into account considerations of both a general and particular nature, we allow ourselves to be "persuaded" by the circumstance that the bourgeoisie is "provoking" us to take power, we shall find that we have been fooled by the bourgeoisie. For, undoubtedly, the bourgeoisie will always prophesy in its fury a million misfortunes to follow the assumption of power by the Bolsheviks; it will always cry in a fury: "Better get rid of the Bolsheviks all at once for 'a long period of years' by letting them attain power and then striking them a mortal blow." Such cries are also "provocation" if you like, only from the opposite

side. The Cadets and the Kovilkov Academy not "advise" and have never "advised" us to seize power; they only wish to *frighten* us by what they call insoluble problems of power.

No, we must not allow ourselves to be frightened by the shouts of the scared bourgeoisie. We must remember that we have never placed before ourselves "insoluble" social problems; as to the perfectly soluble problems of taking immediate steps towards Socialism as the only way out of an extremely difficult situation, *they will only be solved* by the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poorest peasantry. Victory, and lasting victory, is now more than ever, more than anywhere, assured to the proletariat in Russia if it seizes power.

Let us discuss in purely business fashion the *concrete* circumstances which render unfavourable this or that particular moment, but let us not allow ourselves to be frightened for a minute by the wild screams of the bourgeoisie, and let us not forget that the question of the seizure of all power by the Bolsheviks is becoming a really *urgent question of the day*. An immeasurably greater danger is threatening our party if we forget this, than if we concede that the seizure of power is "premature." Nothing can be "premature" in this respect at present; of a million chances all except perhaps one or two are in favour of this.

As to the infuriated abuse of the *Ryech*, we can and must repeat:

> We hear the voice of approbation
> Not in the dulcet sounds of praise,
> But in the roar of irritation! *

The fact that the bourgeoisie hates us so madly is one of the most convincing proofs of the truth that we are *correctly* indicating to the people the ways and means for the overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie.

The *Dyelo Naroda*, this time as a rare exception, did not think fit to honour us with its abuse, but it has not advanced even a shadow of proof, either. Only in an indirect way, in the form of a hint, it seeks to *frighten* us by the prospect, "the Bolsheviks will be obliged to form a cabinet." We admit fully that in trying to scare us the S.-R.'s are themselves most sincerely scared—scared to death by the phantom of the terrorised liberals. Similarly I admit that in some especially lofty and especially rotten institutions like the

* From the poem of Nekrasov on the death of Gogol.—*Ed.*

Central Executive Committee and such like "contact" commissions (for keeping in touch with the Cadets, or, more bluntly, for keeping company with the Cadets), the S.-R.'s may be successful in frightening some of the Bolsheviks; for, in the first place, the atmosphere in all these Central Executive Committees, in the pre-parliament, and so forth, is abominable, poisonous and debilitating, and to breathe it for any length of time is bad for *any one;* and secondly, sincerity is contagious, and a sincerely scared philistine is capable of temporarily transforming even a revolutionist into a philistine.

But no matter how easy it may be, from the "human" point of view, to understand the sincere fright of the S.-R. who has had the misfortune to be a Minister with the Cadets, or in a ministerial position before the Cadets, yet to allow oneself to be frightened means to commit a political error which may easily prove to be bordering on betrayal of the proletariat. What are your business-like arguments, gentlemen? You need not hope that we will allow ourselves to be scared by your fright!

Arguments to the point are to be found this time only in the *Novaya Zhizn.* This time it comes out as an advocate of the bourgeoisie, which role suits it much better than the role of defender of the Bolsheviks, which is obviously "shocking" to this exceedingly lovely damsel.

Six arguments were advanced by this advocate:

1. The proletariat is "isolated from the other classes of the country."
2. It is "isolated from the really vital forces of the democracy."
3. It "will not be able technically to get hold of the state apparatus."
4. It "will not be able to set this apparatus in motion."
5. The "circumstances are exceptionally complicated."
6. It "will not be able to resist all the pressure of the hostile forces which will sweep away not only the dictatorship of the proletariat but the whole revolution as well."

The first argument is stated by the *Novaya Zhizn* so clumsily as to be positively ridiculous, for we know but three classes in capitalist and semi-capitalist society: the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie (with the peasantry as its chief representative), and the proletariat. What sense is there, then, in talking about the proletariat being

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isolated from the other classes, when we talk about the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, a revolution against the bourgeoisie?

The *Novaya Zhizn* must have meant that the proletariat is isolated from the peasantry, for surely there could be no question here of the landowners. But it dared not say directly and clearly that the proletariat is now isolated from the peasantry, for the glaring untruth of such a statement is too strikingly self-evident.

It is difficult to imagine that in a capitalist country the proletariat should be so little isolated from the petty bourgeoisie—and this, do not forget, in a revolution *against the bourgeoisie*—as is the proletariat now in Russia. We have objective and undisputed data concerning the voting *for* and *against* a coalition with the bourgeoisie; these are the most recent data about the "curia" of Tsereteli's "Bulygin Duma," * *i.e.*, the notorious "Democratic" Conference.

Taking the Soviet curia, we find:

	For Coalition	*Against Coalition*
Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies	83	192
Soviets of Peasants' Deputies...	102	70
All Soviets	185	262

Thus the majority as a whole is on the side of the proletarian slogan: *against* a coalition with the bourgeoisie. And we have seen above that even the Cadets are forced to admit the growing influence of the Bolsheviks in the Soviets. Still, what we have here is a conference summoned by the Soviet leaders of *yesterday*, by the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks who have an assured majority in the central institutions. It is clear that the *actual* predominance of the Bolsheviks in the Soviets is here *not sufficiently expressed.*

Both on the question of a coalition with the bourgeoisie and on the immediate transfer of the landowners' land to the peasant committees, the Bolsheviks already have a *majority* in the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies—*a majority of the people*, a majority of the petty bourgeoisie. The *Rabochy Put*, No. 19, October 7, cites from No. 25 of the S.-R. organ, *Znamya Truda*, an

* The Democratic Conference is likened to the Duma proposed by Minister Bulygin in 1905 which was given only consultative powers and excluded workers from the elections.—*Ed.*

account of a conference of Soviets of Peasant Deputies held in Petrograd on October 1. At this conference, the Executive Committees of four peasant Soviets (Kostroma, Moscow, Samara and Tauric provinces) expressed themselves in favour of unlimited coalition. For a coalition without the Cadets there were the Executive Committees of *three* provinces and *two* armies (Vladimir, Ryazan and the Black Sea provinces). Against coalition there were the Executive Committees of *twenty-three* provinces and *four* armies

Thus, the majority of the peasantry is against the coalition!

Here is your "isolation of the proletariat."

We must note, by the way, that *for* coalition there were three border provinces, Samara, Tauric and Black Sea, where there are a comparatively large number of rich peasants, big landowners, working their land with hired labour, and also four industrial provinces (Vladimir, Ryazan, Kostroma and Moscow) where also the peasant bourgeoisie is stronger than in the majority of the Russian provinces. It would be interesting to gather more detailed data on this subject and to ascertain whether any information is available regarding the *poorest* peasants in the provinces containing the "*richest*" peasantry.

Further, it is interesting to note that the "national groups" yielded a considerable majority to the opponents of a coalition, namely, 40 votes against 15. The annexationist, harshly oppressive policy of the Bonapartist Kerensky and Co. towards the non-sovereign nations of Russia has borne fruit. The broad masses of the population of the oppressed nations, *i.e.*, the masses of the petty bourgeoisie among them—trust the Russian proletariat more than they do the bourgeoisie, for history has here brought to the foreground the struggle for freedom of the oppressed nations against their oppressors. The bourgeoisie has betrayed the cause of freedom of the oppressed nations in a dastardly way; the proletariat is true to the cause of freedom.

The national and agrarian questions—these are fundamental questions for the petty-bourgeois masses of the population of Russia at the present time. This is indisputable. With regard to both questions the proletariat is remarkably far from isolation. It has behind it the majority of the people. It *alone* is capable of pursuing such a decided, truly "revolutionary-democratic" policy on both questions as would assure immediately to a proletarian state power not only the support of the majority of the population, but a veritable outburst of revolutionary enthusiasm among the masses; since

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for the first time the masses would meet on the part of the government, not a merciless oppression of the peasantry by the landowners, of the Ukrainians by the Great Russians, as under tsarism; not attempts to follow the same policy under a republic, only camouflaged by high-sounding phrases; not caviling, insults, chicanery, dilatoriness, hauteur, evasions (with all of which Kerensky rewards the peasantry and the oppressed nations); but warm sympathy expressed in deeds: immediate and revolutionary measures against the landowners, immediate *complete* restitution of freedom to Finland, the Ukraine, White Russia, the Mohammedans, etc.

The S.-R. and Menshevik gentlemen know this very well, and this is why they drag the semi-Cadet leaders of the co-operatives to assist in their *reactionary*-democratic policy *against* the masses. This is why they will never dare to consult the masses, to institute a referendum or even a vote in all the local Soviets, in all local organisations, on definite points of practical policy, for instance, whether all the landowners' lands should be given over immediately to the peasant committees, whether such and such demands of the Finns and Ukrainians should be conceded, and so forth.

And the question of peace, that cardinal question of the whole of present-day life? The proletariat is "isloated from the other classes." . . . Truly, the proletariat here steps forth as the representative of the *whole* people, of all that is alive and honest in *all* classes, of the vast majority of the petty bourgeoisie; for only the proletariat, having attained power, will at once propose a just peace to all the belligerent nations; only the proletariat will undertake really *revolutionary* measures (publication of secret treaties, etc.) so as to obtain at the earliest moment as just a peace as possible.

No, the gentlemen of the *Novaya Zhizn*, howling about the isolation of the proletariat, only express thereby their own subjective terror induced by the bourgeoisie. The objective state of affairs in Russia is undoubtedly such that *just at the present time* the proletariat is *not* "isolated" from the majority of the petty bourgeoisie. Just now, after the sad experience of the "coalition," the proletariat has on its side the sympathy of the *majority* of the people. *This* condition for the retention of power by the Bolsheviks *is* there.

The second argument consists in the assertion that the proletariat is "isolated from the really vital forces of the democracy." What

this means it is impossible to understand. It is probably "Greek," as the French say in such cases.

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The writers of the *Novaya Zhizn* are ministerial people. They would be fit to serve as Ministers under the Cadets. For what is required of such Ministers is the ability to utter fine-sounding sleek phrases in which there is no sense whatever, which can cover up every rottenness, and which are therefore assured of the applause of the imperialists and the social-imperialists. The applause of the Cadets, of Breshkovskaya, of Plekhanov and Co. is guaranteed the *Novaya Zhizn*-ists by their statement that the proletariat is isolated from the really vital forces of the democracy; for in an *indirect* way it means—or it will be understood as though it meant—that the Cadets, Breshkovskaya, Plekhanov, Kerensky and Co. are "the vital forces of the democracy."

This is untrue. These are dead forces. This has been proved by the history of the coalition.

Cowed by the bourgeoisie and bourgeois-intellectual environment, the *Novaya Zhizn*-ists recognise as "vital" the Right Wing of the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks, such as the *Volya Naroda, Yedinstvo,* etc., which differ in nothing vital from the Cadets. We, on the other hand, recognise as "vital" only what is bound up with the masses, not with the kulaks, only that which has been led by experience of the coalition to turn away from it. "The active vital forces" of the petty-bourgeois democracy are represented by the Left Wings of the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks. The strengthening of this Left Wing, particularly after the July counter-revolution, is one of the most certain objective signs that the proletariat is *not* isolated.

This has become still more evident just lately by the wavering of the S.-R. Centre towards the Left, as proved by Chernov's declaration of October 7, to the effect that this group cannot support the new coalition with Kishkin and Co. This wavering towards the Left of the S.-R. Centre, which until now has formed an overwhelming majority of the representatives of the S.-R. Party—the party which, as a result of the number of votes obtained by it in the towns and particularly in the villages, occupies a supreme and dominating position—proves that the statement quoted by us from the *Dyelo Naroda* regarding the necessity for the democracy, under certain circumstances, to "guarantee full support" to a purely Bolshevik government, is, at any rate, not a mere phrase.

Such facts as the refusal of the S.-R. Centre to support a

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coalit[illegible] of the *opponents* of coalit[illegible] among the *M*[illegible]*ik* [illegible] the provinces (Jordania in the Caucasu[illegible] etc.) are objective p[illegible] that a certain section of the *masses*, who, until now, have f[illegible]owed the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s, *will support* a purely Bolshevik government.

It is just from the *vital* forces of the democracy that the Russian proletariat is not isolated at present.

The third argument: the proletariat "will not be able technically to get hold of the state apparatus." This, we grant, is the most usual, the most widespread argument. It deserves the greatest attention both for this reason and because it really points out one of the most *serious*, one of the most *difficult* tasks confronting the victorious proletariat. There is no doubt these tasks are very difficult, but if, while calling ourselves Socialists, we point out this difficulty for the sole purpose of *avoiding* the fulfilment of these tasks, then, in practice, there will be no difference between us and the servants of the bourgeoisie. The difficulties of the tasks of the proletarian revolution should only stimulate those siding with the proletariat to study more carefully, and more concretely, the methods of carrying out these tasks.

By the state apparatus is meant, first of all, the standing army, the police and officialdom. In speaking of the proletariat being unable technically to get hold of this apparatus, the writers of the *Novaya Zhizn* reveal the greatest ignorance and unwillingness to heed either the facts of life or the deductions made long ago in Bolshevik literature.

The writers of the *Novaya Zhizn* all consider themselves, if not Marxists, at any rate as being acquainted with Marxism and as educated Socialists. And Marx taught us, from the experience of the Paris Commune, that the proletariat *cannot* simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and set it in motion for its own purposes, that the proletariat must *destroy* this machinery and replace it by a new one. (This I treat in detail in a pamphlet, *The State and Revolution—the Teaching of Marxism about the State, and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the Revolution.**) This new state apparatus was created by the Paris Commune, and of the same type of "state apparatus" are the Russian Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. I have pointed this out many times, begin-

* Little Lenin Library, Vol. 14.—*Ed.*

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ning April 17, 19[illegible] Bolshevik conference [illegible] Bolshevik [illegible]ture. Of course, the *Novaya Zhizn* could have [illegible]ounced its complete disagreement both with Marx and with the Bolsheviks, but for a journal that has so often and so haughtily abused the Bolsheviks for their "frivolous" attitude towards difficult questions, to evade this subject altogether means to issue to themselves a certificate of poverty.

The proletariat *cannot* "lay hold" of the "state apparatus" and "set it in motion." But it can *destroy* all that is oppressive, that is merely routine and is incurably bourgeois in the old state apparatus, and put in its place *its own*, new apparatus. This apparatus is the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies.

One cannot but call it simply monstrous that the *Novaya Zhizn* has completely forgotten this "state apparatus." In conducting thus their theoretical discussions, the writers of the *Novaya Zhizn* are actually doing in the sphere of political theory exactly what the Cadets are doing in the sphere of political practice. For if the proletariat and revolutionary democracy really need *no* new state apparatus, then the Soviets lose their *raison d'être;* in that case the Cadet-Kornilovists are *right* in their efforts to reduce the Soviets to naught.

This monstrous theoretical error and political blindness of the *Novaya Zhizn* is so much the more monstrous in that even the Menshevik-Internationalists (with whom the *Novaya Zhizn* entered into a bloc at the last municipal elections in Petrograd) have revealed in this question a certain approach towards the Bolsheviks. Thus we read in the declaration of the Soviet majority read by Comrade Martov at the Democratic Conference:

> . . . The Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies created in the first days by the mighty impulse of the truly creative genius of the people, have formed that new tissue of the revolutionary state which has replaced the decayed state tissue of the old regime. . . .

This is expressed a trifle too prettily—*i. e.,* pretentiousness of language conceals here the insufficient clarity of political thought. The Soviets have *not yet* replaced the old "tissue," and this old tissue is *not* the state of the old regime, but the state of *both* tsarism *and* the bourgeois republic. Still, Martov here stands two heads above the *Novaya Zhizn*-ists.

The Soviets are the new state apparatus, which, in the first place, represents the armed force of the workers and peasants, a force that

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is not divorced from the people, not with the force of the old standing army, but is bound up with them as closely as possible. In a military sense, this force is incomparably more mighty than the former; in relation to the revolution it is second to none. Secondly, this apparatus represents a connection with the masses, with the majority of the people, that is so intimate, so indissoluble, so readily verifiable and renewable, that nothing like it was even approached in the former state. Thirdly, this apparatus, because it is elective and its personnel is subject to recall in accordance with the will of the people without any bureaucratic formalities, is far more democratic than were the former ones. Fourthly, it represents a firm connection with the most diverse occupations, thus facilitating all sorts of most radical reforms without any bureaucracy. Fifthly, it represents a form of organisation of the vanguard, *i. e.*, of the most class-conscious, most energetic, most progressive section of the *oppressed* classes, of the workers and peasants, and is thus an apparatus whereby the vanguard of the oppressed classes can elevate, educate and lead in its train the *whole gigantic mass* of these classes which until now have stood absolutely outside all political life, outside history. Sixthly, it makes it possible to combine the advantages of parliamentarism with the advantages of immediate and direct democracy, *i. e.*, to unite in the persons of elected representatives of the people both legislative and *executive* functions. Compared with bourgeois parliamentarism, this is a step forward in the development of democracy which has an historical world significance.

Our Soviets of 1905 were only, so to speak, an embryo, for they existed for a few weeks only. It is quite clear that under the circumstances of the time there could be no question of their all-round development. In the 1917 Revolution, there can as yet be no question of it either, for a period of a few months is too little, and, above all, the S.-R. and Menshevik leaders of the Soviets have *prostituted* them, have degraded them to the role of talking shops, of accessories to the conciliationist policy of the leaders. The Soviets have been rotting and decaying under the leadership of the Libers, Dans, Tseretelis, and Chernovs. The Soviets can only develop properly and expand to the full their promise and capabilities when they assume *full* state power, for otherwise they have *nothing* to do; otherwise they are simply embryos (and an embryo

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cannot endure too long) of mere playthings. Dual power means the paralysis of the Soviets.

Had not the popular creativeness of the revolutionary classes given rise to the Soviets, the proletarian revolution in Russia would have been hopeless, for there is no doubt that with the old state apparatus, the proletariat could not have retained power, while it is impossible to create a new apparatus all at once. The sad history of the prostitution of the Soviets by Tsereteli and Chernov, the history of the "coalition," is, at the same time, the history of freeing the Soviets from petty-bourgeois illusions, passing through the "purgatory" of a practical study of all the abominations and filth of *all and every* bourgeois coalition. Let us hope that this "purgatory" has not undermined the Soviets, but has tempered them.

The main difficulty in a proletarian revolution is the realisation on a national scale of a most exact and honest accounting and control, *workers' control* over production and distribution of goods.

When the writers of the *Novaya Zhizn* argued that in putting forward the slogan of "workers' control" we were falling into syndicalism, this argument was a specimen of a silly schoolboy application of "Marxism," which, instead of having been intelligently digested, has been only learned by rote after the manner of Struve. Syndicalism either rejects the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, or relegates it, like political power in general, to the last place. We give it first place. If one were to talk simply in the spirit of the *Novaya Zhizn*-ists—not workers' control but state control—one would have a bourgeois-reformist phrase, in fact a purely Cadet formula, for the Cadets have nothing against the *participation* of the workers in "state" control. The Cadet-Kornilovists know very well that such participation is the best way for the bourgeoisie to deceive the workers, the best method of subtly bribing in a political sense all kinds of Gvozdevs, Nikitins, Prokopoviches, Tseretelis, and all that crowd.

When we say "workers' control," placing this slogan *side by side* with the dictatorship of the proletariat, and always after it, we thus make clear what state we have in mind. The state is an organ of the rule of a class. Which class? If the bourgeoisie, then this is just the Cadet-Kornilov-Kerensky statehood under which the working people of Russia have been suffering for over half a year. If the proletariat, if we have in mind a proletarian state, *i. e.*, the dic-

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tatorship of the proletariat, their workers' control *can* become a national, all-embracing, omnipresent, most exact and most conscientious *accounting* of production and distribution of goods.

Therein lies the main difficulty, therein is the main task of the proletarian, *i. e.*, the Socialist revolution. Without the Soviets this task, at any rate for Russia, would be impossible of achievement. The Soviets indicate the organisational work of the proletariat which *can* solve this problem of historical world significance.

Here we have approached another side of the question of state apparatus. Besides the preponderant "repressive" machinery, the standing army, the police, and the officialdom, there is in the modern state a machinery that is closely connected with banks and syndicates, fulfilling as it does a great mass of work of accounting and record-keeping, if one may so express it. This machinery cannot and must not be broken up. It must be forcibly freed from subjection to the capitalists; the latter must be cut off, broken, chopped away from it with the threads transmitting their influence; it must be *subjected* to the proletarian Soviets; it must be made wider, more all-embracing, more popular. And this *can* be done by relying on the achievements already attained by large-scale capital (as, indeed, the proletarian revolution in general can only attain its aim by taking these achievements as its basis).

Capitalism created the *apparatus* for accounting: the banks, syndicates, post office, consumers' societies, unions of employees. *Without the big banks Socialism could not be realised.*

The big banks are that "state apparatus" which we *need* for the realisation of Socialism and which we *take ready-made* from capitalism. Our problem here is only to *chop off* that which capitalistically disfigures this otherwise excellent apparatus and to make it even *larger,* more democratic, more all-embracing. Quantity will change into quality. One state bank as huge as possible, with branches in every *township,* in every factory—this is already nine-tenths of the *Socialist* apparatus. This is general state *accounting,* general state *accounting* of production and distribution of goods, this is, so to speak, something in the nature of the *skeleton* of Socialist society.

This "state apparatus" (which under capitalism is not wholly a state apparatus but which will be completely so with us under Socialism) we can "lay hold of" and "set in motion" at one stroke, by one decree, for the actual work of bookkeeping, control, regis-

tration, accounting and summation is here carried out by *employees*, most of whom are themselves in a proletarian or semi-proletarian position.

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The proletarian government can and must, by one decree, transform all these employees into state employees—in the same way that the watch-dogs of capitalism, such as Briand and other bourgeois Ministers, transform striking railwaymen into state employees. We shall need a great many more of such state employees; and more of them *can* be obtained, for capitalism has simplified the functions of accounting and control, and has reduced them to such comparatively simple processes as to be within the reach of any literate person.

The "nationalisation" of the bank, syndicate, commercial and other such employees is perfectly realisable, both technically (thanks to the preliminary work accomplished for us by capitalism and finance capitalism) and politically, under the conditions of control and supervision by the *Soviets*.

As for the higher employees, of whom there are very few, but who incline towards the capitalists, we shall have to treat them like capitalists—"with severity." They, like the capitalists, will *resist*, and this resistance will have to be *broken*. The immortally naive Peshekhonov lisped as early as June, 1917, like the real "state infant" * that he is, that "the resistance of the capitalists has been broken"; but this childish phrase, this infantile swagger, this boyish sally, *will be turned by the proletariat into reality in all seriousness.*

This we can do, for here it is a question of breaking the resistance of an insignificant minority of the population, literally a handful of people, over every one of whom the employees' unions, trade unions, consumers' societies and the Soviets will institute such supervision that every Tit Titych ** will be *surrounded* like the French at Sedan. We know them all by name: it is enough to take the lists of directors, members of management boards, the big shareholders, and so on. There are a few hundred of them, at most a few thousand, in the whole of Russia, each of whom the proletarian state, with its Soviet apparatus, its employees' unions, and so on, can surround with tens or hundreds of controllers, so that possibly, instead of "breaking the resistance," we may succeed, by means of *workers'*

* A derisive expression used by the famous satirist Saltykov-Shchedrin to designate a naive and ignorant high official.—*Ed.*

** Name of a tyrannical merchant ridiculed in one of Ostrovsky's comedies. —*Ed.*

control (over the capitalists), in making any such resistance *impossible.*

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The vital matter will be not the confiscation of capitalist property, but universal, all-embracing workers' control over the capitalists and their possible supporters. By means of confiscation alone you can do nothing, for in that there is no element of organisation, of accounting, of correct distribution. We shall readily substitute for confiscation the levying of a *just tax* (even using Shingarev's rates), if only we can thereby exclude the possibility of any evasion of account rendering, concealing of the truth, evading the law. And *only* workers' control in the *workers' state* will *remove* this possibility.

Forced syndication, i. e., forced uniting into associations under the control of the state, is what capitalism has prepared; this is what the Junker state has realised in Germany, this is what will be completely realisable in Russia for the Soviets, for the dictatorship of the proletariat; this is what the "state apparatus," universal, new and non-bureaucratic, will give us.*

The fourth argument of the advocates of the bourgeoisie: the proletariat will be unable to "set in motion" the state apparatus. This argument, in comparison with the preceding one, presents nothing new. The old apparatus we could neither seize nor set in motion. The new apparatus, the Soviets, has already been set in motion by the "mighty impulse of the real national creative genius." This apparatus must only be freed of the shackles put on it by the domination of the S.-R. and Menshevik leaders. This apparatus is *already* in motion, it is only necessary to rid it of the disfiguring petty-bourgeois appendages which are hindering it from going forward and forward in full swing.

To complete what was said above, two circumstances must be examined: first, the new methods of control that have been created, not by us, but by capitalism in its military-imperialist stage; second, the significance of the deepening of democracy in the work of *administering* a state of the proletarian type.

The grain monopoly and bread cards have been created, not by us, but by the belligerent capitalist state. It has already created universal labour service within the framework of capitalism—that is,

* For more details about the meaning of forced syndication see my pamphlet, *The Threatening Catastrophe and How to Fight It.* [Little Lenin Library, Vol. 11.—*Ed.*]

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a military hard labour prison for the workers. But here too the proletariat, as in all its historical creative work, takes its implements from capitalism; it does not "think them up," or "create them from nothing."

The grain monopoly, the bread cards, universal labour service become, in the hands of the proletarian state, in the hands of the all-powerful Soviets, the most powerful means for accounting and control, a means which, extended to the capitalists and *the rich in general,* being applied to them by the *workers,* will give a power unheard-of in history for "setting in motion" the state apparatus, for overcoming the resistance of the capitalists, for subjecting them to the proletarian state. This means of control and *compulsory labour* is stronger than the laws of the Convention and its guillotine. The guillotine only frightened, only crushed *active* resistance. *For us this is not enough.*

For us this is not enough. We must not only "frighten" the capitalists so that they feel the all-pervading strength of the proletarian state and forget to think of active resistance to it. We must crush also their *passive* resistance, which is undoubtedly still more dangerous and harmful. We must not only crush every kind of resistance. We must *make people work* within the framework of the new state organisation. It is not enough to "get rid of" the capitalists, it is necessary (after having removed the incapable ones, the incorrigible "resisters") to put them to *new state service.* This applies to the capitalists as well as to a certain upper stratum of the bourgeois intellectuals, clerks, etc.

And we have the means to do so. The belligerent capitalist state has itself given us the means and weapons to carry this out. This means is the grain monopoly, the bread cards, universal labour service. "He who works not, neither shall he eat"—this is the basic, primary and chief rule which the Soviets of Workers' Deputies can and will introduce as soon as they become the governing power.

Every worker has a work book. This document does not humiliate him, although *at the present time* it undoubtedly is a document of capitalist wage slavery, testifying to the subjection of the working man to this or that parasite.

The Soviets will institute the work book *for the rich,* and *then* gradually for the whole population (in a peasant country, a work book will probably be unnecessary for a very long time for the overwhelming majority of the peasants). The work book will cease

to be a sign of belonging to the "rabble," will cease to be a document of the "lower" orders, a certificate of wage slavery. It will be converted into a document testifying that in the new society there are no longer any "labourers," but that, on the other hand, there is no one who is not a *worker*.

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The rich must receive a work book from that union of factory or office workers which is most nearly related to their sphere of activity; they must receive weekly, or at other regular periods, a certificate from this union that they are doing their work conscientiously; without this they will not get their bread card or food products in general. We need good organisers in banking, and in the work of combining enterprises (in these matters the capitalists have more experience, and work is done more easily with experienced people); we need more and more engineers, agronomists, technicians, scientific experts of every kind. We shall give all such workers work which they are able and are accustomed to do; probably, we shall only gradually bring in equality for all work, leaving a temporary higher rate of pay for such specialists during the transition period, but we shall put them under an all-embracing workers' control; we shall attain the full and unconditional application of the rule: "He who works not, neither shall he eat." As for the organisational form of the work, we do not invent it, we take it ready-made from capitalism: banks, syndicates, the best factories, experimental stations, academies, etc.; we need adopt only the best models furnished by the experience of the most advanced countries.

And of course we are not losing ourselves in a Utopia, we are not ceasing to look at things in a sober, practical way, when we say that the whole capitalist class will offer the most stubborn resistance, but that by the organisation of the whole population in Soviets, this resistance will be broken. The extraordinarily obstinate and non-submissive capitalists will, of course, have to be punished by the confiscation of the whole of their wealth and by imprisonment; on the other hand, the victory of the proletariat will increase the number of such cases as those of which, for instance, I read in today's *Izvestiya:*

On October 9, two engineers appeared before the Central Council of Factory and Shop Committees with the declaration that an engineering group had decided to form a union of Socialist engineers. Recognising that the present time is the beginning of social revolution, the union places itself at the disposal of the working masses, and in the interests of the workers it wishes

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to act in complete accord with the workers' organisations. The representatives of the Central Council of Factory and Shop Committees replied that the Council would gladly form within its organisation an engineering section including in its programme the fundamental theses of the first conference of Factory and Shop Committees regarding workers' control over production. In the near future there will be a joint session of the delegates of the Central Council of Factory and Shop Committees and the provisional group of Socialist engineers (*Izvestiya*, October 10, 1917).

The proletariat, we are told, will be unable to set the state apparatus in motion.

After the 1905 Revolution, Russia was ruled by 130,000 landowners. They ruled by means of constant force over 150,000,000 people, by pouring unlimited scorn on them, by subjecting the vast majority to hard labour and semi-starvation.

And yet we are told that Russia will not be able to be governed by the 240,000 members of the Bolshevik Party—governing in the interests of the poor and against the rich. These 240,000 already have no less than a million votes of the adult population back of them, for just this proportion between the number of votes cast for a party and the number of its members has been established by the experience of Europe and also of Russia, as, for instance, in the August municipal elections in Petrograd. So here we have already a "state apparatus" of *one million* persons faithful to the ideal of the Socialist state, and not working merely for the sake of getting a fat roll every 20th of the month.

Moreover, we have a "magic means" for increasing *tenfold* our state apparatus with one stroke, a means which never has been and never could be at the disposal of a capitalist state. This magic thing is the drawing of the workers, the poor people, into the everyday work of managing the state.

To explain how simple is the application of this magic means, how faultless is its action, we shall take a most simple and obvious example.

The state has forcibly to evict a family from a house and to install another in it. This is done time and again by the capitalist state, and it will also have to be done by ours, by the proletarian or Socialist state.

The capitalist state evicts a workers' family which has lost its breadwinner and does not pay rent. There comes upon the scene a bailiff, policeman, or militiaman, with a whole platoon of men. In a working-class district a whole detachment of Cossacks is necessary for the eviction. Why? Because the bailiff and policeman

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refuse to go without military protection of considerable strength. They know that the sight of an eviction brings forth such mad fury among the neighbouring population, among thousands and thousands driven well-nigh to despair, such hatred against the capitalists and the capitalist state, that the bailiff and the squad of police might at any moment be torn to pieces. Large military forces are necessary; several regiments of soldiers must be brought into the town from a province, necessarily distant, so that the soldiers may know nothing of the life of the town poor, so that the soldiers may not be "infected" with Socialism.

The proletarian state has forcibly to move a very needy family into the dwelling of a rich man. Our detachment of workers' militia consists, let us say, of fifteen people—two sailors, two soldiers, two class-conscious workers (of which only one needs to be a member of our party or sympathising with it), one intellectual, and eight poor labourers, of whom there would be at least five women, servants, unskilled workmen, and so on. The detachment comes to the rich man's house, investigates, and finds five rooms for two men and two women. "For this winter, citizens, you must confine yourselves to two rooms and prepare two rooms for two families that are now living in cellars. For a time, until with the help of engineers (you are an engineer, I think?) we build good houses for all, you will have to put yourselves out a bit. Your telephone will serve ten families. This will save about a hundred hours' work in running to the stores, and so on. Then in your family there are two unoccupied semi-workers capable of doing light work—a woman of fifty-five and a boy of fourteen. They will be on duty for three hours daily, superintending the distribution of products for the ten families, and they will keep the necessary accounts. The student in our detachment will write out two copies of the text of this state order and you will kindly give us a signed declaration of your undertaking to carry out the duties accurately."

Thus, in my view, could be demonstrated in very clear examples the difference between the old bourgeois and the new Socialist state apparatus and state administration.

We are not Utopians. We know that just any labourer or any cook would be incapable of taking over immediately the administration of the state. In this we agree with the Cadets, with Breshkovskaya, and with Tsereteli. But we differ from these citizens in that we demand an immediate break away from the prejudice that

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assumes that the *administration* of the state, the performance of the ordinary, everyday work of management, can only be done by the rich or by officials picked from rich families. We demand that the *teaching* of the business of state administration should be conducted by the class-conscious workers and soldiers, that this should be started immediately, *i. e.*, that steps should be taken *immediately* to start giving such instruction to all the labouring masses, all the poor.

We know that the Cadets also agree that democracy should be taught to the people. Cadet ladies are willing to give lectures to servants on women's rights, in accordance with the best French and English authorities. Also, at the very next concert-meeting, before an audience of thousands of people, there will be arranged on the platform a general kissing: a Cadet lady lecturer will kiss Breshkovskaya, the latter will kiss the ex-Minister Tsereteli, and a grateful people will thus learn the meaning of republican equality, liberty and fraternity. . . .

Yes, we quite agree that the Cadets, Breshkovskaya and Tsereteli are in their own way devoted to democracy, and propagate it among the people; but what is to be done if we have an idea of democracy somewhat different from theirs?

According to us, in order to mitigate the unheard-of burdens and miseries of the war, and at the same time to heal the terrible wounds inflicted on the people by the war, *revolutionary* democracy is necessary, *revolutionary* measures are needed, of the kind described in the example of the redistribution of dwellings in the interests of the poor. *Exactly in the same way* must we deal both in town and country with foodstuffs, clothes, boots, and so on, and in the country with the landowners' land, etc. For the administration of the state *in this* spirit we can *bring into action immediately a state apparatus* of about ten if not twenty millions—an apparatus unknown in any capitalist country. This apparatus only *we* can create, for we are assured of the full and unlimited sympathy of the vast majority of the population. This apparatus only *we* can create, because we have class-conscious workers, disciplined by a long "apprenticeship" to capitalism (not for naught did we serve this apprenticeship to capitalism), workers who are *capable* of forming a workers' militia and *gradually* of enlarging it (commencing this enlargement immediately) into a *universal* militia. The class-conscious workers must lead, but they can attract to the

actual work of administration the real labouring and oppressed masses.

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Of course, mistakes are inevitable during the first steps taken by this new apparatus. But did the peasants make no mistakes when, emerging from serfdom and becoming free, they began to manage their own affairs? Can there be any other method of teaching the people to manage their own affairs and to avoid mistakes than that of actual practice, than the immediate starting of real popular self-government? The most important thing at the present time is to get rid of the prejudice of the bourgeois intellectuals that only special officials, entirely dependent on capital by their whole social position, can carry on the administration of the state. The most important thing is to put an end to that state of affairs in which the bourgeois, the petty officials and "Socialist" Ministers try to manage the state as of old, but cannot manage, and, after seven months, are faced with a peasant rising in a peasant country!! The most important thing is to instil in the oppressed and labouring masses confidence in their own power, to show them by actual practice that they can and must themselves undertake correct, most strict, orderly, organised distribution of bread, of every kind of food, milk, clothing, dwellings and so on, *in the interests of the poor*. Without this, there can be no salvation of Russia from collapse and ruin; whereas an honest, courageous, universal move to hand over the administration to the proletarians and semi-proletarians will give rise to such an unheard-of revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses, will multiply so many times the popular forces in the struggle against suffering, that much that seemed impossible to our narrow old bureaucratic forces will become practicable for the forces of the masses, millions upon millions who *begin to work for themselves* and not for the capitalist, not for the master, not for the official, not under the compulsion of the stick.

With the question of the state apparatus is also connected the question of centralism, raised in a particularly energetic, but particularly unsuccessful, manner by Comrade Bazarov in No. 138 of the *Novaya Zhizn*, October 10, in an article, "The Bolsheviks and the Problem of Power."

Comrade Bazarov reasons thus: "The Soviets are not the kind of apparatus that is adapted to all spheres of state life," for a seven months' trial is supposed to have shown, and the evidence of "tens

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and hundreds of documents possessed by the Economic Section of the Petrograd Executive Committee" to have confirmed, that although in many places the Soviets have had practically "full power," "they could not obtain any satisfactory results in their campaign against economic ruin." It is necessary, says Bazarov, to have an apparatus "divided according to branches of industry, strictly centralised within the limits of each branch and subject to one general state centre." "It is a question"—kindly note—"not of replacing the old apparatus, but of reforming it . . . however much the Bolsheviks may sneer at people with a plan."

All these observations of Comrade Bazarov are really amazingly helpless. They are an exact copy of the argument of the bourgeoisie, a reflection of its class point of view.

Now, really, to speak of the Soviets as having had anywhere in Russia, at any time, "full power," is simply absurd (if it is not a mere repetition of the selfish class lie of the capitalists). Full power means power over the whole land, over all the banks, all the factories; a man but slightly acquainted with historical experience, with scientific data concerning the connection between politics and economics, could not have "forgotten" this "slight" circumstance.

The lying method of the bourgeoisie consists in this, that, while *refusing* to give the Soviets power, *sabotaging* every one of their serious attempts, keeping the government in their own hands, holding power over the land and banks, and so on, they yet throw all the blame for the economic ruin on the Soviets! It is just this that forms the whole deplorable experience of the coalition.

The Soviets never had full power, and their measures so far could yield nothing but palliatives and further entanglements.

To prove to the Bolsheviks, who are centralists by conviction and by the programme and tactics of their whole party, the need for centralism means really to try to break into an open door. If the writers of the *Novaya Zhizn* indulge in such trivial activities, it is only because they have completely failed to understand the meaning of our mocking at their "general state" point of view. They fail to understand this because the *Novaya Zhizn*-ists only recognise the class struggle with their *lips*, not with their minds. Repeating the words about the class struggle which they have learnt by heart, they stumble every second over a theoretically amusing and practi-

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cally reactionary "above-class point of view," calling this servility to the bourgeoisie a "general state" plan.

The state, my dear people, is a class concept. The state is an organ or apparatus of force to be used by one class against another. So long as it remains an apparatus for the bourgeoisie to use force against the proletariat, so long can the slogan of the proletariat be only—the *destruction* of this state. But when the state has become proletarian, when it has become an apparatus of force to be used by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, then we shall be fully and unreservedly for a strong state power and centralism.

Speaking more popularly, we are not ridiculing "plans"; we only laugh at the fact that Bazarov and Co. do not understand that, in rejecting "workers' control," in rejecting the "dictatorship of the proletariat," they *stand* for the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. There is no middle course. That is but an empty dream of the petty bourgeois democrat.

Not a single centre, not a single Bolshevik ever argued against the *centralism* of the Soviets or their unification. None of us has ever objected to organising the factory and shop committees by branches of production and their centralisation. Bazarov is shooting *beside the mark.*

We laugh, have laughed, and shall continue to laugh, not at "centralism," nor at plans, but at *reformism.* For your reformist is doubly comical after the experience of the coalition. To say: "Not a change of apparatus but reform," is to be a reformist, is to become not a revolutionary but a reformist democrat. Reformism is nothing but concessions on the part of the ruling class; it does not signify the overthrow of this class; it signifies that concessions are made by it while it keeps power in its hands.

This is exactly what has been tried by the coalition for half a year.

This is what we are ridiculing. Bazarov, not having digested the concept of the class struggle, allows himself to be caught by the bourgeoisie, which sings in chorus: "Just—just so—we are not at all against reform, we are for the participation of the workers in the control of the state, we fully agree to this." The good Bazarov plays *objectively* the role of a person echoing the opinion of the capitalists.

This has always been and always will be the case with people who, in times of acute class struggle, endeavour to occupy a "middle"

position. And it is just these academy writers of the *Novaya Zhizn* are incapable of understanding the class struggle that their policy is such a ridiculous, eternal vacillation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Better take to "plan-making," my dear citizens—that is not politics, that is not a matter of the class struggle. In this sphere you can indeed be useful to the people. You have many economists on your paper; unite with such engineers, etc., as are ready to work a little on the question of regulating production and distribution. Devote your big "apparatus" (your paper) to a business-like working out of exact data regarding the production and distribution of goods in Russia, regarding the banks, syndicates, etc., etc. Thereby you will benefit the people; here your position between two chairs can do no great harm. Here is work on "plans" which will arouse, not the ridicule, but the gratitude of the workers.

The proletariat, when victorious, will act thus. It will set the economists, engineers, agricultural experts and so on to work out a "plan" *under the control* of the workers' organisations, to test it, to seek means of saving labour by means of centralism, and of securing the most simple, cheap, convenient, general control. We shall pay the economists, statisticians, technicians, good money, but —but we shall not give them anything to eat unless they carry out this work honestly and entirely *in the interests of the workers.*

We are in favour of centralism and of a "plan," but it must be the centralism and the plan of the *proletarian* state—the proletarian regulation of production and distribution in the interest of the poor, the labouring, the exploited, *against* the exploiters. By the "general state" concept we agree to understand only that which breaks the resistance of the capitalists, which gives full power to the majority of the people, *i. e.*, to the proletarians and semi-proletarians—the workers and the poorest peasants.

The fifth argument is that the Bolsheviks will not retain power because "the circumstances are exceptionally complicated."

Oh, wiseacres! They are prepared perhaps to tolerate revolution, but without "exceptionally complicated circumstances."

Such revolutions never occur, and in the yearnings after such revolutions there is nothing but the reactionary lamentation of the bourgeois intellectual. Even if a revolution starts in circumstances which seem not so very complicated, the revolution itself, in its

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development, always given for exceptionally complicated circumstances. For a revolution, a real, deep, "people's revolution," to use Marx's expression, is the incredibly complicated and painful process of the dying of the old and the birth of the new social order, the adjustment of the lives of tens of millions of people. A revolution is the sharpest, most furious, desperate class struggle and civil war. Not a single great revolution in history has escaped civil war, and no one who does not live in a shell could imagine that civil war is conceivable without "exceptionally complicated circumstances."

If there were no exceptionally complicated circumstances, there would be no revolution. If you fear wolves, do not go into the forest.

In this fifth argument there is nothing to discuss, because there is neither economic nor political nor indeed any other idea in it. There is only the yearning of people who have been saddened and frightened by the revolution. To characterise these yearnings, I shall take the liberty of citing two little personal reminiscences.

A conversation with a rich engineer not long before the July days. The engineer had been at one time a revolutionist, a member of the Social-Democratic, indeed, of the Bolshevik Party. Now he is just in one tremor of fear and fury at the turbulent, untamable workers. "If at least they were workers, like the Germans!" said he (an educated man who had been abroad). "Of course, I understand in a general way, the inevitability of the social revolution, but to think of it now, when the standards of the workers have been so lowered by the war. . . . No, it is not revolution, it is an abyss."

He would be ready to accept the social revolution if history would lead up to it in the same peaceful, quiet, smooth, orderly way in which a German express train approaches a station. A sedate conductor opens the door of the car and calls out: "Social Revolution Station! *Alle aussteigen!*" * In such a case, why not pass from the position of engineer under the Tit Tityches to that of engineer under the workers' organisations?

This man has seen strikes. He knows what a storm of passion is always aroused by an ordinary strike, even in the most peaceful times. He understands, of course, how many million times stronger must this storm be when the class struggle has aroused the *whole* labouring people of an enormous country, when the war and ex-

* All out!—*Ed.*

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ploitation have reduced almost to despair millions of people who have been tortured for centuries by landowners, and robbed and downtrodden for decades by capitalists and tsarist officials. He understands all this "theoretically"; he recognises all this with his lips. He is simply scared by the "exceptionally complicated circumstances."

After the July days I was compelled, on account of the specially careful attention paid me by the Kerensky government, to go underground. Of course, it was the workers who gave people like us shelter. In an out-of-the-way workers' suburb of Petrograd, in a small working-class house, dinner is served. The hostess puts bread on the table. "Look," says the host, "what fine bread. 'They' dare not give us bad bread now. And we had almost forgotten that good bread could be had in Petrograd."

I was amazed at this class evaluation of the July days. My mind had revolved around the political significance of the event, it estimated its role in the general course of events, it analysed the situation that had given rise to the zigzag of history and the situation it was bound to create, and considered how we must alter our slogans and party apparatus so as to adapt them to the changed circumstances. As for bread, I, who had never been in need, never thought of it at all. Bread to me appeared of itself, as it were, as a sort of by-product of a writer's work. Fundamentally, one's ideas reach the class struggle for bread, through political analysis, by an extraordinarily complicated and involved path.

But the representative of the oppressed class, although one of the well-paid and well-educated workers, takes the bull straight by the horns, with that wonderful simplicity and directness, with that firm determination, with that astonishing clear insight, which is as far from us, the intellectuals, as the stars in the sky. The whole world is divided into two camps: "we," the labouring, and "they," the exploiters. Not a shade of confusion as to what had happened—just one of the battles in the long struggle of labour against capital. When wood is cut, chips must fly.

"What a painful thing are these 'exceptionally complicated circumstances' of the revolution!" Thus thinks and feels the bourgeois intellectual.

"We have screwed 'them' down; 'they' do not dare make trouble for us as before. Let's press harder still, and we'll overthrow them altogether!" Thus thinks and feels the worker.

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The sixth and last argument is that the proletariat "will not be able to resist all the pressure of the hostile forces which will sweep away not only the dictatorship of the proletariat but the whole revolution as well."

Do not try to scare us, gentlemen, we won't be scared. We have seen these hostile forces and their pressure in Kornilovism (from which Kerenskyism differs in no way). How Kornilov's forces were routed by the proletariat and the poorest peasantry; how pitiful and helpless was the position of the supporters of the bourgeoisie and the small number of representatives of the particularly well-to-do small local landowners who were particularly hostile to the revolution—these things were seen by all; they are remembered by the people. The *Dyelo Naroda* of October 13, in trying to persuade the workers to "tolerate" Kerenskyism (*i.e.*, Kornilovism) and Tsereteli's fake Bulygin Duma until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (convoked under the protection of "military measures" against the rising peasants!), repeats with gusto this sixth argument of the *Novaya Zhizn*, and screams till it becomes hoarse: "The Kerensky government will under no circumstances submit" (to the Soviet power, to the power of the workers and peasants, which, not to lag behind the Black Hundreds, the anti-Semites, Monarchists and Cadets, the *Dyelo Naroda* calls the power of "Trotsky and Lenin"—this is how low the Socialist-Revolutionaries have sunk!).

But the class-conscious workers are not to be frightened either by the *Dyelo Naroda* or by the *Novaya Zhizn*. "The Kerensky government," you say, "will under no circumstances submit"—that is, it will repeat the Kornilov affair, to speak more simply, more directly, more clearly. And the gentlemen of the *Dyelo Naroda* dare to say that that will be "civil war," that this is a "terrible prospect"!

No, gentlemen, you will not deceive the workers. This will not be civil war, but a most hopeless conspiracy of a handful of Kornilovists; or perhaps they wish, by not "submitting" to the people, to provoke at all costs a repetition on a large scale of what happened at Vyborg in connection with the Kornilovists; *if* the S.-R.'s *desire* this, if the member of the S.-R. Party, Kerensky, desires this, he can drive the people to desperation. But you will not frighten the workers and soldiers with this, gentlemen.

What unlimited impudence! They fake a new Bulygin Duma by means of trickery, they recruit, by fraud, a crowd of reactionary leaders of co-operatives, of village kulaks to assist them; to these

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they add capitalists and landowners (called propertied elements), and with this band of Kornilovists they want to *obstruct* the *will of the people*, the will of the workers and peasants.

They have brought affairs in a peasant land to such a state that everywhere the tide of peasant revolts is rising! Just think of it! In a democratic republic, where 80 per cent of the people are peasants, they were actually driven to a peasant uprising. . . . The same *Dyelo Naroda*, Chernov's organ, the organ of the "Socialist-Revolutionary" Party, which on October 13 had the impudence to advise the workers and peasants to "be patient," had been forced to admit, in a leading article on October 12, that "almost nothing has so far been done to destroy the conditions of *slavery* which *still prevail* in the villages of Central Russia."

This same *Dyelo Naroda*, in the same article, October 12, says that "the grip of Stolypin is still felt strongly in the methods of the 'revolutionary Ministers.'" That is, in other words, they call Kerensky, Nikitin, Kishkin and Co., *Stolypinists*.

The "Stolypinists," Kerensky and Co., have brought the peasants to uprising, and now they introduce "military measures" against the peasants, and console the people with promises to convoke the Constituent Assembly (although Kerensky and Tsereteli have already *deceived* the people once, for, after triumphantly declaring, on July 21, that the Constituent Assembly would be convoked on September 30, they *broke their word* and put off the Constituent Assembly, even against the advice of the *Menshevik Dan*, not to the end of October as the Menshevik Central Executive Committee of that time desired, but to the end of November). The "Stolypinists," Kerensky and Co., console the people with the idea of the early convocation of the Constituent Assembly, as though the people could trust those who have already played them false in like circumstances, as though the people could believe in the *honest* convocation of the Constituent Assembly by a government which is introducing *military measures* in out-of-the-way villages, and thus quite evidently *concealing* arbitrary arrests of class-conscious peasants and the *falsification* of the elections.

They drive the peasants to uprising, and then have the impudence to tell them that it is necessary to "be patient," it is necessary to wait a while, to trust that government which is putting down the rebelling peasants with "military measures."

They bring matters to such a pass as to drive to perdition hun-

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dreds of thousands of Russian soldiers in the offensive after July 2, to prolong the war, to provoke a mutiny of German sailors, who threw their superiors overboard, they bring about such a state of affairs, all the time uttering fine phrases about peace, *without offering* a just peace to *all* the belligerent nations; and yet they have the effrontery to tell the workers and peasants, to tell the dying soldiers, "You must be patient a bit, trust the government of the 'Stolypinist,' Kerensky, have faith another month in the Kornilovist generals" (who perhaps in another month will lead to the slaughter a few more tens of thousands of soldiers) . . . "forbear a little longer."

Is this not impudence?

No, Messrs. S.-R.'s, party colleagues of Kerensky—you will not deceive the soldiers!

Not a single day, not a single *extra* hour, will the workers and soldiers tolerate the Kerensky government, for they know that the Soviet government will make an *immediate* offer of a just peace to all the belligerents, and will therefore *in all probability* reach an immediate armistice and an early peace.

Not a single day, not a single *extra* hour will the soldiers of our peasant army tolerate that, in spite of the opposition of the Soviets, the Kerensky government, with its *military measures* for putting down the peasant rising, should stand.

No, Messrs. S.-R.'s, party colleagues of Kerensky—you will no longer deceive the workers and peasants.

As to the pressure of the hostile forces, which, according to the assurances of the mortally terrified *Novaya Zhizn*, will sweep away the dictatorship of the proletariat, there is contained here another monstrous logical and political error which only those can pass over who have allowed themselves to be terrorised to the point of losing their senses.

"The pressure of hostile forces," you say, "will sweep away the dictatorship of the proletariat." Very well. But you are all economists and educated people, my dear fellow-citizens. You all know that to compare democracy with the bourgeoisie is senseless and clownish, that it is just the same as comparing pounds with yards. For there may exist a democratic bourgeoisie and there may exist non-democratic strata of the petty bourgeoisie (capable of Vendéeism).*

* Vendée—the region where the peasants supported the nobles during the French Revolution in 1793 under the influence of the church.—*Ed.*

"Hostile forces"—this is the phrase. The class meaning of it, however, is the *bourgeoisie* (behind which stand also the landowners).

The bourgeoisie and the landowners; the proletariat; the petty bourgeoisie, the petty proprietors among whom are primarily, the peasants—these are the three fundamental "forces" into which Russia is divided, like *every* capitalist country. Here are the three fundamental "forces" which are made evident in every capitalist country (and in Russia) not only by a scientific economic analysis but by the *political experience* of all the more recent history of *all* countries, by the experience of *all* European revolutions of the eighteenth century, and by the experience of the *two* Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917.

And so you threaten the proletariat that the pressure of the bourgeoisie will sweep away their power? This and this only is what your threat comes down to; it has no other meaning.

Very well. If, for instance, the bourgeoisie can sweep away the power of the workers and poorest peasantry, then nothing else remains than coalition, *i.e.*, a union or understanding of the petty bourgeoisie with the bourgeoisie. Nothing else can even be imagined!!

But the coalition has been tried for half a year, and has led to collapse, and you yourselves, dear citizens of *Novaya Zhizn*, but incapable of thinking, you yourselves have *forsworn* it.

What is the result?

You have become so muddled, citizens of *Novaya Zhizn*, you have allowed yourselves to be so scared that even in the most simple discussion, *in counting not even up to five but only up to three*, you cannot make things come out right.

Either all power to the bourgeoisie—this you have not defended for a long time, indeed not even the bourgeoisie itself dares to hint at it, knowing that already on May 3-4 the people overthrew such power by one movement of their shoulder, and would overthrow it now thrice as determinedly and mercilessly. Or all power to the petty bourgeoisie—that is, to its coalition, (union, agreement) with the bourgeoisie, for the petty bourgeoisie cannot and does not wish to take power independently, as has been proved by the experience of all revolutions; and also proved by economic science, which explains that in a capitalist country one can stand for capitalism or for labour but one cannot stand in the middle. Thus coalition in Russia has tried dozens of methods for half a year, and has failed.

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Or, finally, all power to the proletariat and poorest peasantry, against the bourgeoisie in order to break its resistance. This has not yet been tried, and this you, gentlemen of the *Novaya Zhizn*, *dissuade* the people from doing, you try to scare them with the bourgeoisie as you yourselves are scared.

No fourth course can be thought of at all.

Consequently, if the *Novaya Zhizn* is afraid of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and rejects it because of the possible defeat of a proletarian power by the bourgeoisie, this amounts to a stealthy return to the position of *coalition* with the capitalists!!! It is clear as daylight that he who is afraid of resistance, who does not believe in the possibility of breaking this resistance, he who admonishes the people: "Take heed of the resistance of the capitalists, you will be unable to overcome it," *thereby* invokes again the acceptance of an understanding with the capitalists.

Helpless and pitiful is the confusion of the *Novaya Zhizn*, as is now the confusion of all the petty-bourgeois democrats who see the collapse of the coalition, who dare not defend it openly, who, being themselves protected by the bourgeoisie, are afraid of an all-powerful proletariat and poorest peasantry.

To be afraid of the resistance of the capitalists while calling oneself a revolutionist and desiring to be numbered among the Socialists —what a disgrace! What an ideological collapse of international Socialism, corrupted by opportunism, was necessary so that such voices could be raised!

We have already seen, the whole nation has already seen, the strength of capitalist resistance; for the capitalists, being more class-conscious than the other classes, at once recognised the significance of the Soviets, and immediately spent *all their strength*, did all and everything, adopted every device, went to the length of most atrocious measures of lies and abuse, of military plots—all *in order to destroy the Soviets*, to reduce their power to *naught*, to prostitute them (with the help of the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks), to transform them into talk shops, and to tire out the peasants and workers by months and months of the emptiest chatter and playing at revolution.

But the strength of the resistance of the proletariat and poorest peasantry *we have still not seen*, for this strength will rise to its full height only when power is in the hands of the proletariat, when tens of millions of people crushed by need and capitalist slavery see by

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actual experience, when they *feel* that power in the state has really been attained by the oppressed classes, that the state power is really helping the poor to struggle against the landowners and capitalists, is *breaking* their resistance. Only then shall we be able to see what untapped forces of resistance to capitalism are hidden within the people; only then will be made evident what Engels calls "hidden Socialism," only then will it appear that for every ten thousand open or concealed enemies who resist, actively or passively, the authority of the working class, *a million* new fighters arise, until then politically dormant, dragging out an existence in tortures of poverty and despair, having lost faith in themselves as human beings, having forgotten that they too have a right to live, that they too could be served by the modern centralised state, that their battalions of proletarian militia can also be called with full confidence to participate in the immediate, direct, daily work of administration of the state.

The capitalists and landowners, with the sympathetic help of the Plekhanovs, Breshkovskayas, Tseretelis, Chernovs and Co., have done *everything* to *soil* the democratic republic, to pollute it by their servility to wealth, to such an extent that the people have been seized by apathy and indifference. It is *all the same to them,* for a hungry man cannot distinguish between a republic and a monarchy: a frozen, shoeless, weary soldier, perishing for the interests of others, is in no condition of getting to love a republic.

However, when the last common workman, every unemployed worker, every cook, every ruined peasant sees, not from the paper, but with his own eyes, that the proletarian power is not cringing before the rich, but is helping the poor, that this power is not afraid of revolutionary measures, that it takes surplus products from the parasites and gives them to the hungry, that it forcibly moves the homeless into the dwellings of the rich, that it forces the rich to pay for milk, but does not give them a drop of it until the children of *all* the poor families have received adequate supplies, that the land is passing into the hands of the toilers, that the factories and banks are coming under the control of the workers, that serious and immediate punishment is meted out to millionaires who conceal their riches—when the poor see and feel this, then no forces of the capitalists and kulaks, no forces of international finance capital manipulating hundreds of billions will be able to conquer the people's revolution; on the contrary, *it* will conquer the whole world, for in all countries the Socialist revolution is maturing.

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Our revolution is unconquerable if it is not afraid of itself, if it entrusts full power to the proletariat. For back of us stand the immeasurably larger, more developed, more organised world forces of the proletariat, temporarily crushed by the war, but not destroyed; on the contrary, only multiplied by it.

To fear that the power of the Bolsheviks—that is, the power of the proletariat, which is assured of the unlimited support of the poorest peasantry—will be "swept away" by the capitalist gentlemen! What shortsightedness! What disgraceful distrust of the people! What hypocrisy! The people who manifest this fear belong to that "upper" (by capitalist standards, but in reality *rotten*) "society," which pronounces the word "justice" without itself believing in it, as a habit, as a phrase, without putting any content into it.

Here is an example:

Mr. Peshekhonov is a well-known semi-Cadet; a more moderate Labourite, at one in ideas with the Breshkovskayas and Plekhanovs, it would be difficult to find; there was no Minister more servile to the bourgeoisie; the world has never seen a warmer partisan of the coalition, of an understanding with the capitalists.

And here is the admission this gentleman was compelled to make in his speech at the "Democratic" (read: Bulygin) Conference, according to the report of the defensist *Izvestiya:*

> There are two programmes. One is the programme of group claims, class and national claims. This programme is most openly defended by the Bolsheviks. But the other sections of the democracy cannot readily reject this programme. For this is a recognition of the claims of the labouring masses, of the ill-treated and oppressed nationalities. It is not so easy, therefore, for the democracy to break with the Bolsheviks, to deny these class demands, above all because these demands are, in their essence, just. But this programme for which we struggled before the revolution, for the sake of which we made the revolution, and which under other circumstances we all would have supported very strongly, presents, under the present circumstances, a great danger. The danger is now so much the greater that these demands have to be asserted at a moment when their satisfaction by the state is impossible. We must first of all save the whole—the state—we must first of all save it from ruin, and there is only one way of doing this—not to satisfy demands, however just and strong they might appear, but on the contrary, to call for limitations and sacrifices, which must be borne on all sides (*Izvestiya* of the Central Executive Committee, September 30).

Mr. Peshekhonov does not understand that, while the capitalists are in power, he is defending *not* the whole, but the avaricious interests of Russian and "Allied" imperialist capital. Mr. Peshekhonov

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does not understand that the war will cease to be an imperialist, predatory war of conquest only after a break with the capitalists, with *their* secret treaties, with *their* annexations (seizure of others' lands), with *their* banking, financial swindles. Mr. Peshekhonov does not understand that only *after* this would the war become—if the enemy were to reject a formal offer of a just peace—a defensive just war. Mr. Peshekhonov does not understand that the defensive power of the country, after ridding itself of the yoke of capitalism, and after giving the land to the peasants and placing the banks and factories under workers' control, would be many times stronger than the defensive power of a capitalist country.

And, most important of all, Mr. Peshekhonov does not understand that when he is forced to admit the justice of Bolshevism, to admit that its demands are the demands of the "labouring masses," *i.e.*, of the majority of the nation, he *abandons* thereby his whole position, the whole position of the whole petty-bourgeois democracy.

Herein lies our strength. Our government will be invincible because even our antagonists are forced to admit that the Bolshevik programme is the programme of the "labouring masses" and "oppressed nationalities."

Mr. Peshekhonov, remember, is the political friend of the Cadets, of the people of the *Yedinstvo* and the *Dyelo Naroda,* of the Breshkovskayas and the Plekhanovs. He is the representative of the kulaks and of those gentlemen whose wives and sisters would come tomorrow to gouge out with their umbrellas the eyes of the dying Bolsheviks, if they were beaten by Kornilov's or (what comes to exactly the same thing) Kerensky's soldiers.

And such a gentleman is *compelled* to recognise the justice of the Bolshevik demands.

For him "justice" is but a phrase. But for the masses of the semi-proletarians, for the majority of the petty bourgeoisie of town and country, ruined, exhausted, tortured by the war, it is not a phrase, but the most direct, the most burning, the most momentous question, that of starvation or a crust of bread. This is why no policy can be based on coalition, on an "understanding" between the interests of the hungry and ruined and the interests of the exploiters. This is why the Bolshevik government is assured of the support of the overwhelming majority of these masses.

Justice is an empty word, say the intellectuals and those rascals who are inclined to declare themselves Marxists on the very lofty

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ground that they have once "contemplated the hind end" of economic materialism.

Ideas become power when they seize hold of the masses. Just now the Bolsheviks, *i.e.*, the representatives of revolutionary proletarian internationalism, have by their policy given substance to this idea which is stirring the vast labouring masses of the whole world.

Justice of itself, the mere feelings of the indignant exploited masses, would never have led them on the right road to Socialism. But when, thanks to capitalism, there grew up the apparatus of big banks, syndicates, railways, and so on; when the rich experience of the most advanced countries has amassed a hoard of marvellous technical knowledge, the application of which capitalism is now *hindering;* when the class-conscious workers have formed a party of a quarter of a million members for the purpose of taking this apparatus into their hands in a planned fashion and setting it going with the support of all the labouring and exploited masses—when these conditions are extant, then there is no force on earth which can prevent the Bolsheviks, *if only they do not allow themselves to be cowed* and are able to seize power, from retaining it until the final victory of the world Socialist revolution.

Postscript

The foregoing lines had already been written when the leading editorial of the *Novaya Zhizn* of October 14 yielded a new pearl of stupidity, the more dangerous since it is concealed under the flag of sympathy for the Bolsheviks, or under the shelter of the wisest philistine discussion about "not letting ourselves be provoked" (not letting ourselves be caught in a snare of screams about provocation serving the purpose of frightening off the Bolsheviks from seizing power). Here is this pearl:

> The lessons of movements such as those on July 16 and 18, on the one hand, and the Kornilov days on the other, have shown quite clearly that democracy which has at its disposal the organs that are most influential among the population, is invincible when it is on the defensive in a civil war, but that it suffers defeat, losing all the intermediate vacillating elements, when it takes the initiative of attack into its own hands.

If the Bolsheviks were to show in any form whatever any leanings towards the kind of philistine stupidity expressed in this argument they would ruin both their party and the revolution.

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For the author of this argument, having taken it upon himself to talk of civil war (a theme very suitable indeed for that perfectly charming lady, the *Novaya Zhizn*), has perverted the *lessons of history* with an almost incredibly comic result.

Here is how Karl Marx, the representative and founder of proletarian revolutionary tactics, analysed *these* lessons, the lessons of history in connection with *this* question:

> Insurrection is an art quite as much as war or any other, and subject to certain rules of proceeding, which, when neglected, will produce the ruin of the party neglecting them. Those rules, logical deductions from the nature of the parties and the circumstances one has to deal with in such a case, are so plain and simple that the short experience of 1848 had made the Germans pretty well acquainted with them. Firstly, never play with insurrection unless you are fully prepared to face the consequences of your play. Insurrection is a calculus with very indefinite magnitudes, the value of which may change every day; the forces opposed to you have all the advantage of organisation, discipline, and habitual authority. [Marx has in mind the most difficult case of insurrection against a "firmly established" old power, against an army that has not decayed under the influence of the revolution and the vacillating policy of the government.] Unless you bring strong odds against them you are defeated and ruined. Secondly, the insurrectionary career once entered upon, act with the greatest determination, and on the offensive. The defensive is the death of every armed rising; it is lost before it measures itself with its enemies. Surprise your antagonists while their forces are scattering, prepare new successes, however small, but daily; keep up the moral ascendancy which the first successful rising has given to you; rally those vacillating elements to your side which always follow the strongest impulse, and which always look out for the safer side; force your enemies to a retreat before they can collect their strength against you; in the words of Danton, the greatest master of revolutionary policy yet known, *de l'audace, de l'audace, encore de l'audace!* [Rendered freely: "Audacity, more audacity and still more audacity."—*Ed.*] *

We have changed all this, the "also-Marxists" of the *Novaya Zhizn* might say of themselves: instead of triple audacity we have two qualities—yes, we have two—"moderation and accuracy." For "us" the experience of world history, the experience of the great French Revolution, is of no consequence. For "us" the experience of the two movements of 1917, distorted by Molchalin ** spectacles, is sufficient.

Let us have a look at this experience without these lovely spectacles.

* The whole quotation is taken from Karl Marx, *Revolution and Counter-revolution, or Germany in 1848*. London, 1920, pp. 119-120. This is a collection of articles written by Engels which were ascribed wrongly to Marx, although these articles were written at the request of Marx for the *New York Tribune* and were edited by him.—*Ed.*

** Molchalin is a submissive state official in a comedy by Griboyedov.—*Ed.*

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July 16-18 you compare with "civil war"; for you implicitly believe Alexinsky, Pereverzev and Co. It is characteristic of the gentlemen of the *Novaya Zhizn* that they believe *such* people (while doing nothing themselves independently to *collect* information regarding July 16-18, although they have the huge apparatus of a big daily paper).

But let us concede for a moment that July 16-18 was not merely the beginning of civil war, kept by the Bolsheviks within the limits of incipiency, but a real civil war—let us grant this.

What then does this lesson indicate?

Firstly, that the Bolsheviks did *not* take the offensive, for it is indisputable that had they taken the offensive on the night of July 16-17, or even during July 17, they would have achieved a good deal. Their defensive tactics were their weakness, if we are to talk of civil war (as does the *Novaya Zhizn*) and not of the transformation of a spontaneous outburst into a demonstration of the type of May 3-4 (as the *facts* tell us).

And thus the "lesson" speaks *against* the wiseacres of the *Novaya Zhizn*.

Secondly, if the Bolsheviks did not even aim at an insurrection on July 16-17, if not a single organisation of the Bolsheviks even raised this question, the reason for this is *outside* our dispute with the *Novaya Zhizn*. For we are discussing the lessons of a "civil war," *i.e.*, of an uprising, and not of the circumstances when a revolutionary party, knowing that it has not a majority on its side, does not even think of an uprising.

As it is well known that the Bolsheviks received a majority in the Soviets both in the capitals and in the country (more than 49 per cent of the votes in Moscow) *much later* than July, 1917, therefore the "lessons" to be drawn are, once again, not at all those which the perfectly charming *Novaya Zhizn* lady would like to draw.

No, no; you had better not take to politics, citizens of the *Novaya Zhizn!*

If a revolutionary party has no majority in the vanguard of the revolutionary classes and throughout the country, then there can be no question of an uprising. Besides this, an insurrection requires: (1) the maturing of the revolution on a general national scale; (2) the complete moral and political collapse of the old, for instance the "coalition," government; (3) great vacillation among

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all the intermediate elements, i.e., among those who are *not* fully in favour of the government, although they fully supported it yesterday.

Why has the *Novaya Zhizn*, in proceeding to discuss the "lessons" of July 16-18, not even noticed this very important lesson? Because they are not politicians discussing political questions, but only members of a circle of intellectuals frightened out of their wits by the bourgeoisie.

Further, and thirdly, the facts show that it is just *after* July 16-17, precisely as a result of the *revelation* of the nature of the Messrs. Tseretelis' *July* policy, precisely because the *masses* have recognised the Bolsheviks as *their own* front-rank fighters and the "Social-blocists" as traitors, that the *collapse* of the Mensheviks and S.-R.'s is beginning. This collapse was already fully proved *even before* the Kornilov episode, by the elections of September 2, in Petrograd, which gave a victory to the Bolsheviks and played havoc with the "Social-blocists." (The *Dyelo Naroda*, not long ago, tried to disprove this, concealing the totals regarding *all* parties, but this is a self-deception and a deception of the reader. According to the *Dyen* of September 6, referring only to the towns, the percentage of votes for the Cadets rose from 22 to 23, while their absolute number of votes decreased 40 per cent; the percentage of votes for the Bolsheviks rose from 20 to 33, while their absolute number of votes decreased by only 10 per cent; the percentage of votes for all the "intermediates" decreased from 58 to 44, while their absolute number of votes decreased by 60 per cent!!).

The collapse of the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks, after the July days and up to the Kornilov days, is also shown by the growth of the "Left" Wing in each party, reaching nearly 40 per cent—"revenge" for the persecutions of the Bolsheviks by the Kerenskys.

The proletarian party, in spite of the "loss" of a few hundreds of its members, has gained enormously as a result of July 16-17, for precisely in those difficult days the *masses* came to comprehend and to recognise its devotion and the *treachery* of the S.-R.'s and Mensheviks. The "lesson," it appears, is altogether of a different nature from that taught by the *Novaya Zhizn*. Do not leave the seething masses for the "Molchalin democracy," and, if you do revolt, then take the offensive while the forces of the enemy are still scattered—take the enemy unawares.

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Is that not so, gentlemen, you "able Marxists" of the *Novaya Zhizn?*

Or does "Marxism" consist in *not* taking as the foundation for one's tactics an exact account of the *objective* situation and simply throwing in one heap, without reason or criticism, "civil war," "Congress of Soviets and the summoning of the Constituent Assembly"?

But surely, gentlemen, this is simply ridiculous, it is nothing but a mockery of Marxism and of all logic in general. If in the *objective* state of affairs there is *no* foundation for the sharpening of the class struggle to the point of "civil war," *then* why have you started talking about "civil war" in connection with the subject of the "Congress of Soviets and the Constituent Assembly"? (This is the exact title of the leading article in the *Novaya Zhizn.*) In that case you should have told the reader clearly, and shown to him, that in the present objective state of affairs there is *no* foundation for civil war, and that, therefore, one can and must place as the cornerstone of one's tactics peaceful, constitutionally legal, judically and parliamentarily "simple" things, such as the Congress of Soviets and the Constituent Assembly. Then one *can* hold the view that such a congress and such an assembly are really capable of making *decisions.*

If, however, there is the germ of the inevitability, or at least probability, of civil war in the objective circumstances of the moment, if you have not talked of it merely "at random," but clearly seeing, feeling, sensing that the circumstances are opportune for civil war, then how can you place as your cornerstone the Congress of Soviets or the Constituent Assembly? This is surely but mocking the hungry, tortured masses! What! Do you think the starving people will agree to "wait" two months? Or that the economic ruin, of the growth of which you yourselves write daily, will consent to "wait" till the Congress of Soviets or the Constituent Assembly? Or that the German offensive, in the absence of serious steps towards peace (that is, in the absence of a formal offer of a just peace to all the belligerents) on our side, will agree to "wait" until the meeting of the Congress of Soviets and the Constituent Assembly? Or have you facts that allow you to conclude that the history of the Russian Revolution, which has been proceeding in an extraordinarily stormy way, and with extremely rapid *tempo* from March 13 to October 13, will assume between October 14 and December 12 an

unusually calm, peaceful, legal, balanced pace, excluding explosions, leaps, military defeats, or economic crises? Or will the army at the front, of which the *non*-Bolshevik officer Dubasov declared officially in the name of the front that "it will not fight," will this army begin again to starve and freeze calmly until the date "fixed"? Or will the peasant risings cease to be an element of civil war, merely because you designate them as "anarchy" and "pogrom," or because Kerensky sends "military" forces *against the peasants?* Or is quiet, regular, really honest work by the government for the summoning of the Constituent Assembly possible, *conceivable* in a *peasant* country when at the same time the government is *suppressing* a peasant uprising?

Do not laugh at the "confusion in the Smolny Institute," gentlemen! Your own confusion is no less. You reply to the stern question of civil war by means of confused phrases and pitiful constitutional illusions. This is why I say that if the Bolsheviks were to yield to such moods they would ruin both their party and their revolution.

October 14, 1917.

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INTRODUCTION

ATHEISM is a natural and inseparable part of Marxism, of the theory and practice of scientific socialism. In accordance with their fundamental philosophical outlook, Marx and Engels always called themselves Materialists.

In developing their materialist philosophy, Marx and Engels had at first thoroughly to analyse the ideas which came from the religious world of thought. As early as 1844, Marx coined the phrase: "The criticism of religion is the beginning of all criticism." This analysis was accomplished with such completeness that later the atheistic character of their mature philosophy seemed to require little emphasis and was taken for granted. The same is true of many Marxists and not least of Lenin. It is not an accident therefore, that the works of our great masters, Marx, Engels and Lenin, contain no complete and systematic statement of their proletarian Atheism. It is not usual to talk of obvious facts.

This also explains why atheism has played such a small part in the labour movement generally. In the early days of the labour movement the mass of the workers turned away from religion. In 1874, Engels wrote: "Atheism is practically an accepted fact among European labour parties." Lenin, in 1909, spoke in a similar strain of "class-conscious Social-Democrats, who are of course atheists." Later on however, this sturdy secularism of the labour movement began to deteriorate and the Social-Democratic parties, in their effort to win the support of the petty-bourgeoisie, began to pander to the religious prejudices of the latter.

While the first programme of the Social-Democrats of Germany (the Eisenach programme of 1869) clearly and correctly stated the demand for the separation of Church from State, and School from the Church, the Gotha programme of the Socialist Labour Party (1875) contained the formulation: "Religion is declared a private matter." This opened wide the door to the opportunists. In his commentary

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on this programme, Marx wrote that the workers' party should try rather "to liberate the conscience from the spectre of religion," and added wrathfully: "But they don't think it proper to overstep the bourgeois mark." The German Social-Democratic Party kept to the same idea in its Erfurt programme of 1891. Point 6 of that programme runs: "Ecclesiastical and religious bodies are to be considered as private associations." Engels had previously recommended the formula: "All religious bodies without exception are to be treated *by the State* as private associations. They are not to receive support from public funds or exercise any influence over public education." The Social-Democratic Party ignored Engels' recommendation and even withheld it from the party membership until October, 1901.

In practice the point as adopted by the Party was interpreted as meaning: religion is a private affair; that is to say, that it was not the concern of the Party as to whether a member was religious or not. This applied to the Social-Democratic Parties in other countries as well, with the result that the idea gained ground among the Social-Democrats that Marxism was not anti-religious. Moreover, various sections of the socialist movement arose which claimed to derive their socialist principles from religion. For example, the leaders of the Socialist Party of America, the Independent Labour Party in England, etc. Thus the very principles of socialism were converted by the opportunists into a means of fostering religious superstitions among the workers. Since the war, Social-Democracy has avowedly and definitely repudiated Marxism and has taken a religious turn. It is necessary therefore to re-state the attitude of the Communists towards religion. This attitude is well explained in the collection of articles by Lenin on this subject contained in this small volume. From these the reader will also obtain Lenin's view on how to counteract the religious doping of the workers.

The collection here given contains the most important articles and letters written by Lenin on the questions of religion in the period between 1902 and 1922. It should be remarked that in his comprehensive work, *Materialism and Empirico-Criticism*,* written in 1908, Lenin analysed the idealist philosophy which fosters religious views and in so doing dealt thoroughly with dialectical materialism.

* Published in English by the publishers of this collection.

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The first two articles (written in 1905 and 1909 respectively) represent the most complete statement which we possess by any leading Marxist on the attitude of the modern working-class movement to religion. The third article, like the second, deals with the debate on religion in the Tsarist Duma (1909), and pays special attention to the feeble and reactionary attitude of the liberal bourgeoisie to the reactionary church. The fourth article was written in 1902 on the occasion of a dispute between orthodox believers and a liberal-minded member of the aristocracy which elicited a valuable admission from the faithful, as to "what is the good of religion."

The necessity for unceasing struggle on behalf of atheism within and outside the party was emphasised by Lenin in the article which he wrote as an introduction to the first number of the scientific Bolshevik journal, *Under the Banner of Marxism* (1922), and which we have reprinted as the fifth in this series. We should note, in this, the demand for a united front of all consistent atheists and materialists. The article on Tolstoy (1908) will come as something of a shock to the intellectuals of Western Europe, familiar as they are with books about Tolstoy, since it says in a few sentences what all those thick volumes left unsaid. Proceeding from his basis of historical materialism Lenin goes to the very root of the religious ideas on which Tolstoyanism is founded and at the same time analyses the revolutionary importance of the peasantry.

The two letters from Lenin to Maxim Gorky, written in 1913, are a valuable part of this collection. The letters are directed against the revival of an emotional variety of socialism, with a religious tendency, as preached at that time, after the defeat of the 1905 revolution, by the group of "God-seekers" which had gathered around Lunacharski and Gorky. The fact that this tendency had developed among Lenin's close friends and comrades, made his polemic against it the more biting. In conclusion, we have given extracts from Lenin's great speech to the Young Communists in 1920, on the difference between communist and religious ethics.

From the writings of Lenin the following four principles stand out as the most important:

(1) Atheism is an integral part of Marxism. Consequently a class-conscious Marxist party must carry on propaganda in favour of Atheism.

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(2) The demand for the complete separation of Church and State, and Church and schools, must be made.

(3) The winning over of the proletariat is accomplished, principally by dealing with their everyday economic and political interests; consequently the propaganda in favour of Atheism must grow out of and be carefully related to, the defence of these interests.

(4) The final emancipation of the toiling masses from religion will occur only after the proletarian revolution, only in a Communist society. This, however, is not a reason for postponing the propaganda for Atheism. Rather does it emphasise its urgency in subordination to the general needs of the workers' class struggle.

Lenin's attitude towards religion can be seen most clearly in the programme of the Communist Party of Russia drawn up in March, 1919. Under the heading of "General Political Questions," section 13, we read:

> "With regard to religion, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union does not confine itself to the already-decreed separation of Church and State and of School and Church, *i.e.*, measures advocated in the programmes of bourgeois democracy, which the latter has nowhere consistently carried out to the end owing to the diverse and actual ties which bind capital with religious propaganda.
>
> "The Communist Party of the Soviet Union is guided by the conviction that only the conscious and deliberate planning of all the social and economic activities of the masses will cause religious prejudices to die out. The Party strives for the complete dissolution of the ties between the exploiting classes and the organisation of religious propaganda, facilitates the real emancipation of the working masses from religious prejudices and organises the widest possible scientific educational and anti-religious propaganda. At the same time it is necessary carefully to avoid giving such offence to the religious sentiments of believers, as only leads to the strengthening of religious fanaticism."

Similarly, the programme of the Communist International, adopted at the Sixth World Congress in 1928, states:

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"The fight against religion, the opium of the people, occupies an important position among the tasks of the cultural revolution. This fight must be carried on persistently and systematically. The proletarian power must withdraw all State support from the Church, and abolish the influence exercised by the Church on the system of education and training organised by the State; it must ruthlessly suppress the counter-revolutionary activities of ecclesiastical organisations. The proletarian power acknowledges freedom of conscience, but at the same time uses all the means at its disposal to conduct anti-religious propaganda, abolishes the privileged position of the established church and reforms the entire educational system on the basis of the scientific materialist conception of the world."*

We said at the beginning of this foreword that Marxism cannot be conceived without atheism. We would add here that atheism without Marxism is incomplete and inconsistent. The decline of the bourgeois freethinkers' movement offers an instructive confirmation of this argument. Wherever materialism in science fails to develop into historical materialism—that is, into Marxism—it ends up in idealism and superstition.

* *The Programme of the Communist International* (Modern Books, Ltd., London, 1929). In the section entitled: *The Dynamic Laws of Capitalism and the Epoch of Industrial Capital*, the programme analyses "the incapacity of the bourgeoisie, notwithstanding the enormous achievements of the natural sciences, to create a synthetically scientific philosophy, and the growth of idealist, mystical and religious superstition." . . . The introduction to the programme expressly declares: "Advocating and propagating the dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels, and employing it as a revolutionary method of conceiving reality, with the view of the revolutionary transformation of this reality, the Communist International wages an active struggle against all forms of bourgeois philosophy. . . ."

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I

SOCIALISM AND RELIGION

MODERN society is based entirely on the exploitation of the enormous masses of the working-class, by an insignificant minority of the population—the landowning and capitalist classes. This society is a slave society, for the "free" workers, who work all their lives for the benefit of capital, have a "right" only to so much of the means of existence as is essential to sustain them as slaves while producing profit for the capitalists—or in short sufficient to secure and perpetuate capitalist slavery.

This economic oppression of the workers gives rise inevitably to all forms of political oppression and social degradation: it renders the spiritual and moral life of the masses coarser and more sordid. The workers may acquire a greater or less degree of political freedom to fight for their economic emancipation, but so long as the domination of capital continues, no amount of freedom will rid them of destitution, unemployment and oppression.

Religion is one of the forms of spiritual oppression which everywhere weigh upon the masses who are crushed by continuous toil for others, by poverty and deprivation. The helplessness of all the exploited in their struggle against the exploiters inevitably generates a belief in a better life after death, even as the helplessness of the savage in his struggle with nature gives rise to a belief in gods, devils, miracles, etc.

Religion teaches those who toil in poverty all their lives to be resigned and patient in this world, and consoles them with the hope of reward in heaven. As for those who live upon the labour of others, religion teaches them to be "charitable"—thus providing a justification for exploitation and, as it were, also a cheap ticket to heaven likewise. "Religion is the opium of the people."* Religion is a kind of spiritual intoxicant, in which the slaves of capital

* This aphorism was employed by Marx in his criticism of Hegel's *Philosophy of Law*. After the October revolution it was engraved on the walls of the former City Hall in Moscow, right opposite to the famous Shrine of the Iberian Virgin Mother. This Shrine has now been removed.

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drown their humanity, and blunt their desire for a decent human existence.

But a slave who has become conscious of his slavery, and who has risen to the height of fighting for his emancipation, has half-ceased to be a slave. The class-conscious worker of to-day, brought up in the environment of a big factory, and enlightened by town life, rejects religious prejudices with contempt. He leaves heaven to the priests and bourgeois hypocrites. He fights for a better life for himself, here on earth. The modern proletariat ranges itself on the side of Socialism, which, with the help of science, is dispersing the fog of religion and is liberating the workers from their faith in a life after death, by rallying them to the present-day struggle for a better life here upon earth.

"Religion must be regarded as a private matter"; in these words the attitude of Socialists to religion is usually expressed. But we must define the meaning of these words precisely so as to avoid misunderstanding. We demand that religion be regarded as a private matter as far as the State is concerned, but under no circumstances can we regard it as a private matter in our own party.

The State must not concern itself with religion; religious societies must not be bound to the State. Everyone must be absolutely free to profess whatever religion he likes, or to profess No religion, i.e., to be an atheist, as every Socialist usually is. There must be no discrimination whatever in the rights of citizens on religious grounds. Even particulars concerning the religion of citizens on official documents must be completely done away with.* No subsidies must be paid to the Established Church, and no grants from state funds made to church or religious societies. These must become independent of the State, voluntary associations of citizens of one faith.

Only the fulfilment of these demands can put an end to that shameful and accursed past when the Church was in feudal dependence on the State, and Russian citizens were in feudal dependence on the Established Church; when inquisitorial, mediæval laws (which are still on our statute books and in our legal codes) were actively in force. These laws laid down penalties for the profession or non-

* In Tsarist Russia, the religion one professed was included in the particulars contained in official documents, passport, marriage certificate, etc.

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profession of a particular religion. They violated the conscience of the individual, and connected the distribution of official posts and revenues with the distribution of this or that state church intoxicant. Complete separation of Church and State—this must be the demand of the socialist proletariat to-day.

The Russian Revolution must enforce this demand, as a necessary instalment of political freedom. The Russian Revolution is in fact in a particularly favourable position for doing this, since the disgusting political red tape of the feudal autocracy has stirred up discontent and indignation even among the clergy. Cowed and ignorant as the orthodox Russian clergy is, it has nevertheless been sufficiently aroused by the thunder of the collapsing mediæval Russian regime to endorse the popular demand for liberty. The clergy joins in the protest against the tyranny of officialdom and rebels against the police inquisition forced on the "Servants of God."

Socialists must support this movement, and carry these demands of the honest and sincere clergy to their logical conclusion. Socialists must take them at their word when they talk about liberty, and demand that they completely sever all connection between religion and the police. We must say to them: "If you are sincere you must stand for a complete separation of the Church from the State, for a separation of the school from the church, and insist that religion be regarded entirely and unconditionally as a private matter. If you do not accept these consistent demands of liberty, it means that you are still a slave to inquisitorial traditions—it means that you are still hankering after government posts and the revenues attached to them, it means that you do not believe in the spiritual force of your weapon, and that you still wish to take bribes from the government. If this is so, the class-conscious Russian workers will declare ruthless war on you."

To the proletarian Socialist party, however, religion is not a private matter. Our Party is a league of class-conscious, progressive fighters for the liberation of the working-class. Such a league cannot and must not be indifferent to ignorance or benightedness in the shape of religious beliefs. We demand the entire separation of the State from the Church, in order to disperse the fog of religion by purely intellectual and only intellectual weapons, by our press and oral persuasion. One of the objects of our organisation, the Russian

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Social-Democratic Labour Party,* is precisely to fight against all religious deception of the workers. For us, the ideological struggle is not a private matter but one that concerns the whole Party, and the whole proletariat.

If so, why do we not declare in our programme that we are atheists? Why do we not debar Christians and believers in God from joining our Party?

The answer to this question reveals a very important difference between the bourgeois-democratic, and the Socialist-democratic attitude towards religion.

Our programme is entirely based on scientific—to be more precise—upon *materialist* philosophy. In explaining our programme therefore we must necessarily explain the actual historical and economic roots of religion. Our programme thus necessarily includes the propaganda of atheism. Further the publication of scientific literature (which up till now has been strictly forbidden and persecuted by the autocratic feudal government) must now form one of the items of our party work. We shall now, probably, have to follow the advice which, once upon a time, Engels gave to the German Socialists—to translate and spread among the masses the enlightening atheist literature of the Eighteenth century.

But we must under no circumstances allow ourselves to be sidetracked into a treatment of the religious question in the abstract—idealistically—as a matter of "reason" quite detached from the class struggle—a presentation often given by radical bourgeois democrats. It would be absurd to imagine in a society based upon the unlimited oppression and degradation of the working masses that it is possible to dispel religious prejudices by mere preaching. It would be bourgeois narrow-mindedness to lose sight of the fact that the religious oppression of humanity is only a product or reflex aspect of the economic oppression in society. No books, no preaching, can possibly enlighten the proletariat, unless it is enlightened by its own struggle against the dark forces of capitalism. A union in that genuinely revolutionary struggle of the oppressed class to set up a heaven on earth is more important to us than a unity in proletarian opinion about the imaginary paradise in the sky.

* The original name of the party of which (after 1903) the "Bolsheviks" became the left-wing. Ultimately the division became a complete split and the "Bolsheviks" went forward to become the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R.

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That is why we do not declare, and must not declare in our programme that we are "Atheists"; that is why we do not forbid and must not forbid proletarians who still cling to the remnants of old prejudices to come into closer contact with our Party. We shall always preach a scientific philosophy; we must fight against the inconsistencies of the "Christians"; but this does not mean that the religious question must be pushed into the foreground where it does not belong. We must not allow the forces waging a genuinely revolutionary economic and political struggle to be broken up for the sake of opinions and dreams that are of third-rate importance, which are rapidly losing all political significance, and which are being steadily relegated to the rubbish heap by the normal course of economic development.

The reactionary bourgeoisie, here as elsewhere, always takes pains to fan religious animosities in order to divert the attention of the masses away from those really important and fundamental questions, economic and political, which the Russian proletariat, by combining in the practice of a revolutionary struggle, is deciding. This reactionary tactic of splitting the proletarian forces, which to-day manifests itself mainly by Black-Hundred* pogroms, may to-morrow, express itself in more subtle forms. We will in any case oppose to it a calm, sustained and patient advocacy of proletarian solidarity and scientific philosophy, which will avoid rousing secondary differences.

The revolutionary proletariat will see to it that religion does really become a private matter as far as the State is concerned. And then, under a regime cleaned of mediæval mustiness, the proletariat will wage a great open struggle for the abolition of economic slavery, the real source of the religious deception of humanity.

Novaya Zhizn, No. 28, December 16th, 1905.
(*Signed*) N. LENIN.

* Members of the so-called League of the Russian People, organised by the Tzarist police and patronised by "High Society." In the main the League consisted of hooligans and the dregs of society who were hounded by the police against revolutionaries, students, Jews and other national minorities. They perpetrated the savage "progroms" on the Jews.

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II

THE ATTITUDE OF THE WORKERS' PARTY TOWARDS RELIGION

Social-Democracy builds its whole philosophy on the basis of scientific Socialism, i.e., Marxism. The philosophic basis of Marxism, as Marx and Engels repeatedly declared, is dialectic materialism. This dialectic materialism fully accepts the historical traditions of the Materialism of the eighteenth century in France, and of Feuerbach* (first half of the nineteenth century) in Germany —which is absolutely atheistic, and definitely hostile to all religion. Let us remember that the whole of Engel's *Anti-Dühring*,† which Marx read in manuscript, accuses the "materialist and atheist," Dühring, of not being a consistent materialist, and of leaving loopholes for religion and religious philosophy. Let us remember that Engels, in his essay on Ludwig Feuerbach, reproaches Feuerbach for fighting against religion not in order to destroy it, but in order to revive it, to create a new "exalted" religion, etc.

Marx said: "Religion is the opium of the people"—and this postulate is the corner stone of the whole philosophy of Marxism with regard to religion. Marxism always regarded all modern religions and churches, and every kind of religious organisation as instruments of that bourgeois reaction whose aim is to defend exploitation by stupefying the working-class.

At the same time, however, Engels repeatedly condemned those who, desiring to be "more revolutionary" than Social-Democracy, tried to introduce into the programme of the workers' party the explicit avowal of Atheism—those who strove to "declare war on religion."

In 1874, commenting on a manifesto by some fugitives of the Commune, Blanquists, then emigrants in London, Engels described their noisy proclamation of War on Religion as nonsense, and stated that such a declaration of war would be the best means of reviving interest in religion, and in preventing it from dying out. Engels

* Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) a German philosopher, who first was a follower of Hegel and later became a materialist. In his *Essence of Christianity* he sought to prove that the domination of religion over man had come to an end. Man's highest ideal he argued was inherent in himself and in life on earth. Outside of this there is no other life. In his conception of God, Man merely idealised his own being.

† In English known in a truncated version as *Landmarks of Scientific Socialism*. Charles H. Kerr & Co., New York.

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condemned the Blanquists for failing to understand that only the mass working-class struggle, drawing the widest strata of the proletariat into all forms of conscious and revolutionary social *practice*, will free the oppressed masses really from the yoke of religion; while proclaiming war on religion as a political objective of the workers' party, is a mere anarchist pose. And in 1877, in *Anti-Dühring*, Engels, while ruthlessly attacking the slightest concession made by the philosopher Dühring to Idealism and religion, condemns no less resolutely Dühring's pseudo-revolutionary notion that religion would be *prohibited* in Socialist society.

To declare such war on religion, says Engels, means "being more Bismarckian than Bismarck himself," i.e., to repeat the stupidity of the Bismarckian struggle against clericalism (the famous "Struggle for Culture," Kulturkampf, i.e., the struggle Bismarck waged in 1870 against the German Catholic Party, the party of the "Centre," and the political persecution of Catholicism that it involved). By this struggle Bismarck only *strengthened* the militant clericalism of the Catholics, and injured the work of real culture, because he brought religious divisions instead of political ones to the forefront and thus diverted the attention of sections of the working-class and of the democracy from the urgent tasks of class and revolutionary struggle to those of the most superficial and mendacious-bourgeois anti-clericalism.

Engels accused the would-be ultra-revolutionary Dühring of proposing merely to repeat Bismarck's absurdity in another form. He demanded that the workers' party should work patiently at those tasks of organizing and educating the proletariat, which would lead to religion dying out, and refuse to be drawn into any adventurist political war against religion.

This point of view was thoroughly assimilated by German Social-Democracy, which advocated, for example, freedom for the Jesuits, their admission into Germany, and the cessation of the struggle against any particular religion by police methods. Religion is a "private matter"; this famous point in the Erfurt Programme (1891) confirmed these political tactics of Social-Democracy.

These tactics, however, have nowadays become a matter of mere routine. This has given rise to a new distortion of Marxism—one in the opposite direction, the direction of opportunism.

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This point in the Erfurt programme has come to be interpreted as meaning that we the Social-Democrats—as a party—consider religion to be for *us* a private matter. Without undertaking a direct polemic against this opportunist point of view, Engels in 1890 deemed it necessary to oppose it resolutely, not in a polemical, but in a positive way; that is to say, Engels issued a statement in which he expressly emphasized that Social-Democrats regarded religion as a private matter *in relation to the government*, but by no means in relation to themselves, to Marxism, or to the workers' party.*

This is the history of the stand taken by Marx and Engels on the question of religion. To those who take up a superficial attitude towards Marxism, who cannot or do not want to think, this history is a mass of meaningless contradictions and waverings of Marxism; it is a jumble of "consistent" atheism and "concessions" to religion, an "unprincipled" wavering between a revolutionary struggle against God, and a cowardly desire to "ingratiate" oneself with religious workers—a fear to scare them, etc., etc. The literature of anarchist phrasemongers is replete with attacks of this kind upon Marxism.

But anyone who is at all able to take Marxism seriously, to think out its philosophical principles and the experience of international Social-Democracy, will readily see that Marxian tactics in regard to religion are thoroughly consistent and were profoundly thought out by Marx and Engels; it is obvious that what the dilettantes or ignoramuses regard as wavering is but a direct and inevitable deduction from dialectic materialism. It would be a great mistake to think that the seeming "moderation" of Marxism in relation to Religion can be explained by so-called "tactical" considerations, by the desire "not to frighten" the religious workers, etc. On the contrary, the political line of Marxism on this question is inseparably bound up with its philosophical principles.

Marxism is materialism. As such it is as relentlessly opposed to Religion as was the materialism of the Encyclopædists of the eighteenth century, or as was the materialism of Feuerbach. This is beyond doubt. But the dialectic materialism of Marx and Engels goes

* In his introduction to Marx's *Civil War in France* Engels writes: "The Commune introduced reforms which the Republican bourgeoisie failed to introduce out of cowardice, but which serve as a necessary basis for the action of the working class, for instance, the principle that in regard to the State, religion is a private matter."

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beyond the Encyclopædists* and Feuerbach; it applies the materialist philosophy to the field of history, to the field of social science. We must combat religion—this is the A.B.C. of *all* materialism, and consequently of Marxism. But Marxism is not materialism which stops at the A.B.C. Marxism goes further. It says: We must be able to combat religion, and in order to do this we must explain from the materialistic point of view why faith and religion are prevalent among the masses.

The fight against religion must not be limited nor reduced to abstract-ideological preaching. This struggle must be linked up with the concrete practical class movement; its aim must be to eliminate the social roots of religion. Why does religion retain its hold among the backward strata of the urban proletariat—among wide strata of the semi-proletariat and the masses of the peasantry? Because of the ignorance of the people!—answers the progressive bourgeoisie, the radical or bourgeois materialist. Hence—"Down with religion," "Long live Atheism," "The dissemination of Atheist views is our chief task!"

The Marxist says: "No, this is not true. Such a conception expresses the superficial limitations of bourgeois culture and the narrowness of its objective. It is shallow, and explains the roots of religion, not in a materialist, but in an idealistic fashion."

In modern capitalist countries the basis of religion is primarily *social*. The roots of modern religion are deeply embedded in the social oppression of the working masses, and in their apparently complete helplessness before the blind forces of capitalism, which every day and every hour cause a thousand times more horrible suffering and torture for ordinary working folk than are caused by exceptional events such as war, earthquakes, etc. "Fear created the gods." Fear of the blind force of capital—blind because its action cannot be foreseen by the masses—a force which at every step in life threatens the worker and the small business man with "sudden," "unexpected," "accidental" destruction and ruin, bringing in their train beggary, pauperism, prostitution, and deaths from starvation—this is THE *tap-root* of modern religion which, first of all, and above all, the materialist must keep in mind, if he does not wish to remain stuck for ever in the infant school of materialism.

* The compilers of the Great French *Encyclopædia*, edited by Diderot and d'Alembert in 1751-72. This scientific work was written from the materialist point of view.

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No amount of reading matter, however enlightening, will eradicate religion from those masses who are crushed by the grinding toil of capitalism and subjected to the blind destructive forces of capitalism, until these masses, themselves, learn to fight against the social facts from which religion arises in a united, disciplined, planned and conscious manner—until they learn to fight *against the rule of the capitalist in all its forms.*

Does this mean that educational books against religion are harmful or superfluous? No. Not at all. It means that the propagation of Atheism by the Social-Democracy must be *subordinated* to a more basic task—the development of the class struggle of the exploited masses against the exploiters.

Those who have not gone to the root of dialectical materialism (i.e., of the philosophy of Marx and Engels) may not be able to understand this; or, at least, not able to understand it at first. What! Subordinate ideological propaganda, the propagation of definite ideas? Subordinate the struggle against religion, the thousand-year-old enemy of culture and progress, to the class struggle, to the struggle for transient practical-economic and political aims?

This is one of the many current objections raised against Marxism which reveal a thorough misunderstanding of Marxist dialectics. The contradiction which so confuses those who raise these objections is the contradiction of life itself, i.e., it is a dialectical and not a verbal or an invented contradiction.

To draw a hard and fast line between the theoretical propagation of Atheism, between breaking down the religious beliefs of certain sections of the proletariat, and the effect, the development, the general implications of the class struggle of these sections, is to reason non-dialectically; to transform a variable, relative boundary into an absolute one. It is a forcible tearing asunder of that which is indissolubly connected in reality. For example, the proletariat of a given district in a given branch of industry can be divided, let us say, into a vanguard of fairly class-conscious Social-Democrats (who are, it stands to reason, atheists), and the rather backward mass which, still having ties with the villages and the peasantry, still believes in God, goes to church, or is even directly influenced by the priest. These constitute, let us assume, the Christian Workers' Union. Let us suppose, further, that the economic struggle in such a locality

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has resulted in a strike. A Marxist must place the success of the strike movement above all else, must definitely oppose the division of the workers in this struggle into atheists and Christians, must fight resolutely against such a division.

In such circumstances the preaching of atheism is superfluous and harmful—not from the narrow-minded consideration of not frightening the backward elements, or of losing votes at elections, etc., but from the point of view of the actual progress of the class struggle, which, in the conditions of modern capitalist society, will convert Christian workers to Social-Democracy, and to atheism a hundred times more effectively than any bald atheist sermons. To preach atheism at such a time, and in such circumstances, would only be playing *into the hands* of the Church and the priests, who would desire nothing more than to have the workers participating in the strike movement divided in accordance with their religious beliefs.

The Anarchist, who preaches war against God at all costs, actually helps the priests and bourgeoisie (as in fact the anarchists always do). The Marxist must be a materialist, i.e., an enemy of religion. But he must be a *dialectical* materialist, i.e., one who fights against religion not in the abstract, not by means of abstract, purely theoretical propaganda, equally suited to all times and to all places, but concretely, on the basis of the class struggle actually proceeding —a struggle which is educating the masses better than anything else could do. The Marxist must be able to judge the concrete situation as a whole. He must always be able to determine the boundary between anarchism and opportunism (this boundary is relative, mobile and ever-changing; but it exists), not to fall either into the abstract, wordy and in fact futile "revolutionism" of the Anarchist, or into the philistinism and opportunism of the petty bourgeois, or liberal intellectual, who shirks the fight against religion, forgets his tasks, reconciles himself to a belief in God, and who is guided, not by the interests of the class struggle, but by petty, mean calculations such as: not to offend, not to repel, not to frighten; and who is governed by the wise rule: "live and let live," etc., etc.

It is from this point of view that we must decide all particular questions concerning the attitude of Social-Democrats to religion. For example, the question often arises, is a priest eligible for membership of the Social-Democratic party? Usually, this question is

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answered in the affirmative without any reservation and the experience of European Social-Democratic parties is cited. But this experience was the result not only of the application of the Marxist doctrine to the workers' movement, but, of the peculiar historical circumstances in Western Europe. These conditions being absent in Russia (we will say more about these conditions later) an unqualified affirmative in this case is incorrect. We must not say once and for all, that under no circumstances can priests be allowed to join the Social-Democratic Party; but neither should we affirm categorically the opposite.

If a priest comes to co-operate with us in our work—if he conscientiously performs party work, and does not oppose the party programme—we can accept him into the ranks of Social-Democracy, for the contradictions between the spirit and principles of our programme and the religious convictions of the priest could, in these circumstances, be regarded as a matter in which he contradicts himself, as one which concerns him alone. A political party cannot examine its members to see if there are any contradictions between their philosophy and the Party programme. Of course, such a case would be a rare exception, even in Western Europe; it is hardly possible in Russia. But if, for example, a priest joined the Social-Democratic party, and made it his chief and almost exclusive business to propagate religious views, then, of course, the Party would have to expel him.

We must not only admit into the Social-Democratic Party all those workers who still retain faith in God, we must redouble our efforts to recruit them. We are absolutely opposed to the slightest affront to these workers' religious convictions. We recruit them in order to educate them in the spirit of our programme, and not in order to carry on an active struggle against religion. We allow freedom of opinion inside the Party, but within certain limits, determined by freedom of grouping.* We are not obliged to associate with those who advocate views that have been repudiated by the majority of the Party.

Another example: Is it right, under all circumstances to censure members of the Social-Democratic party for declaring that "Socialism is my religion," and for advocating views which correspond

* At that time the party permitted those holding different shades of opinion to form groups.

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to such a declaration? No! This is undoubtedly a retreat from Marxism (and consequently from Socialism), but the significance of such a retreat, its specific gravity, so to say, may be different under different conditions. It is one thing if an agitator or someone addressing workers, speaks in this way in order to make himself better understood, as an introduction to his subject, in order to present his views in terminology to which the backward masses are more accustomed. It is quite another thing when a writer begins to preach "God-creating" or God-creating Socialism (in the spirit, for example, of our Lunacharsky and Co.). To pronounce censure in the first case would be mere quibbling, or even misplaced restriction of the freedom of the propagandist, on the freedom of "pedagogical" style; in the second case, censure by the party is necessary and obligatory. For the former, the statement "Socialism is my religion" is a step *from* religion to Socialism, for the latter it is a step from Socialism *to* religion.

Let us examine now the conditions which in the West gave rise to the opportunist interpretation of the thesis "religion is a private matter." Undoubtedly, this is due to the operation of those general causes which gave rise to opportunism generally, such as the sacrifice of the fundamental interests of the workers' movement for momentary advantages. The party of the proletariat demands *that the government* shall declare religion a private matter, but it does not for a moment regard the question of the fight against the opium of the people—the fight against religious superstition, etc.—as a private matter. The opportunists have so distorted the question as to make it appear that the Social-Democratic *Party* regards religion as a private matter.

Apart from the usual opportunistic distortion (which our Duma fraction entirely omitted to explain in their speeches during the debate on religion) there are the specific, historical conditions which give rise to-day, if one can so express oneself, to a considerable indifference among European Social-Democrats upon the question of religion. These conditions are of a twofold nature.

First, the fight against religion is the historical task of the revolutionary bourgeoisie, and in the West this task was, to a great extent, undertaken (or was being undertaken) by the bourgeois democracy in the epoch of *their* revolution—of their attack upon the feudalism left over from the Middle Ages. Both in France and in

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Germany there is a tradition of bourgeois struggle against religion, a struggle which was *begun* long before Socialism arose (for instance, the Encyclopædists, Feuerbach). In Russia, because of the conditions of our bourgeois-democratic revolution, this task lies almost wholly on the shoulders of the working-class. Petty-bourgeois (populist)* democracy did not do too much for us in this respect (as the new Black Hundred Cadets or Cadet Black Hundreds of "Vekh" think it did), *but much too little* in comparison with what was done in Europe.

On the other hand, the traditions of the bourgeois war on religion have given rise in Europe to a specifically bourgeois distortion of this struggle by Anarchism, one which the Marxists have explained long since and which repeatedly takes a standpoint identical with that of the bourgeoisie, in spite of the "fury" with which it attacks that bourgeoisie. The anarchists and Blanquists in the Latin countries, Johan Most and Co. in Germany (incidentally Most was a pupil of Dühring), and the anarchists of the 'eighties in Austria carried revolutionary phraseology in the struggle against religion to a *ne plus ultra*. It is not surprising that the European Social-Democrats go astray, even farther than the anarchists. This is natural, and to some degree, forgivable; but we Russian Social-Democrats should not forget the specific historical conditions of the West.

Secondly, in the West *after* the national bourgeois revolutions had drawn to a close, *after* the introduction of more or less complete freedom of conscience, the question of the democratic struggle against religion had been forced into the background by the struggle which bourgeois democracy waged against Socialism to such an extent that the bourgeois governments deliberately tried to draw the attention of the masses away from Socialism by organizing a quasi-liberal "drive" against clericalism. Such was the character of the "Kulturkampf"† in Germany and of the fight of the bourgeois republicans in France against clericalism. The present day "indifference" to the fight against religion, which is so widespread among Social-Democrats in the West, was preceded by bourgeois

* In Russia "Narodniki," from the word "narod," meaning people. These were the predecessors of the Marxists in the Russian revolutionary movement. They consisted mainly of intellectuals who made it their mission to go "among the people," to educate them. They advocated petty-bourgeois, utopian socialism, which they believed could be built up on the basis of the old Russian village communes, without the necessity for Russia passing through the darkness of capitalism. Their direct successors were the Socialist Revolutionaries, who, after the October Revolution, became counter-revolutionary.

† The struggle for culture referred to on page 16.

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anti-clericalism, the purpose of which was to divert the attention of the masses of the workers from Socialism.

And this is quite understandable and legitimate, because Social-Democrats had to oppose bourgeois and Bismarckian anti-clericalism, with the tactics of *subordinating* the struggle against religion to the struggle for Socialism.

Conditions in Russia are quite different. The proletariat is the leader of our bourgeois-democratic revolution. Its Party must be the ideological leader in the struggle against every vestige of mediævalism, including the old state religion, and against every attempt to revive it or to give it a different base, etc. Therefore, although Engels rebuked the German Social-Democrats rather mildly for their opportunism in substituting the *declaration* that religion is a private matter for Social-Democrats and the Social-Democratic Party—for the workers' party *demand* that the *State* shall declare religion a private matter—he would have rebuked the Russian opportunists who imitate this German distortion a *hundred times more sharply*.

Our fraction acted quite correctly when it declared from the Duma tribunal that religion is the opium of the people, and in this way they created a precedent which should serve as the basis for all speeches delivered by Russian Social-Democrats on the question of religion. Should they have gone further and developed in greater detail their atheistic arguments? We think not. This might have incurred the danger of exaggerating the fight of the proletarian political party against religion; it might have led to the obliteration of the line of demarcation separating the bourgeois from the Socialist fight against religion. The first thing the Social-Democratic fraction in the Black Hundred Duma had to do was done with honour.

The second, and perhaps the most important thing that had to be done from the Social-Democratic standpoint was to explain the class role of the Church and the clergy in supporting the Black Hundred government and the bourgeoisie in their fight against the working-class. This also was done with honour.

Thirdly, it was necessary to explain the true meaning of the postulate which the German opportunists advance, i.e., "Religion must be declared to be a private matter."

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III

THE ATTITUDE OF CLASSES AND PARTIES TOWARDS RELIGION

THE debates in the Duma* on the questions of the Budget, of the Holy Synod,† of the restoration of rights to persons leaving their ecclesiastical calling, and finally of the Old Believers'‡ congregation, provided instructive material for a characterisation of the Russian political parties according to their attitude towards religion and the Church. We will briefly examine this material, and deal mainly with the debate on the Budget of the Holy Synod. (We have not yet received the stenographic reports of the debates on the other questions mentioned.)

The first conclusion we must draw from our examination of the Duma debates is that not only does militant clericalism exist in Russia, but it is becoming obviously stronger and better organized. On April 29th, Bishop Mitrophan declared: "The first steps of our activity in the Duma were aimed at raising the highly honourable representatives of the people, in this Duma, above party fractions, and at forming a single group of priests which would discuss all questions from its own ethical point of view. . . . Why have we not achieved this? . . . The fault lies with those who sit on the same benches with you (i.e., the Cadets and 'lefts'), namely, the priest-deputies who belong to the opposition. They were the first to raise their voices and say that what we proposed was nothing but the creation of a Clerical Party and that this was most undesirable. Of course, there is no need to speak of the clericalism of the Russian orthodox clergy—such a tendency never existed among us—and in

* The Russian Parliament. As a result of the 1905 Revolution the Tzar was compelled to establish a Parliament or Duma. The first Duma, which had restricted powers was convened in 1906. Coming into conflict with the government it was dissolved. Another Duma was convened in 1907 which met with the same fate. A third Duma was convened in 1907 on a still more restricted franchise which secured an overwhelming majority for the landlords and capitalists. Ths Duma continued to exist until its term of office expired. The Fourth Duma which succeeded it was dispersed by the revolution of 1917.

† The Supreme Body of the Orthodox Church the members of which were appointed by the Tzar on the recommendation of the Procurator of the Holy Synod—the Minister in charge of the affairs of the Church.

‡ A religious sect that split off from the Orthodox Greek Church in the 18th Century, which clung to the old dogmas and ritual. It frequently came into conflict with the Tzarist government and it took an active part in the rebellions of Stenka Razin and Pugatchev. In latter days it was constantly persecuted by the government and the Church.

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our desire to form a separate group, we pursued purely moral, ethical aims; yet now, gentlemen, when owing to the dissension which the left deputies have sown in our brotherly midst, divisions and splits have taken place, you (i.e., the Cadets*) blame us for it."

Bishop Mitrophan, in his illiterate speech, gave the secret away: the lefts are guilty of having dissuaded a section of the priests in the Duma from organizing a separate "moral" (a word much more suitable for duping the people than "clerical") group!

Almost a month later, May 26th, Bishop Eulogius read out in the Duma the "resolution passed by the Duma clergy," which declared that: "The overwhelming majority of the orthodox clergy in the Duma are of the opinion . . . that for the sake of 'preserving the primacy and predominance of the Orthodox Church' the Old Believers must not be granted the right to preach or to establish congregations at will, nor must the clergy of the Old Believers be allowed to bear the title of minister of religion. . . ." The "purely moral point of view" of the Russian priests thus revealed itself as the most unadulterated clericalism. . . .

What was the "purely moral, ethical point of view of the overwhelming majority of the Duma clergy"?—the third (June) Duma, it should be added. Here are some extracts from their speeches: "I only want to say that the initiative in these (i.e., church) reforms must emanate from within the Church and not from without; not from the state; certainly not from the Budget Commission. The Church is a divine and eternal institution. Its laws are immutable, while the ideals of political life, as we know, are subject to perpetual change" (Bishop Eulogius, April 27th). The speaker recalled "the alarming historical parallel"—the secularization of Church property under Catharine II. "Who can guarantee that the Budget Commission, which this year expresses the desire to subordinate them (Church funds) to governmental control, will not, next year, desire to include them in the state exchequer, and then to take the management of these funds completely out of the hands of the Church and put it into those of the civil or state authority?" . . . "The rules of the Church say that since Christian souls have been entrusted to the care of the bishop, all the more so must the property of the

* A contraction of the words Constitutional Democrats, the designation of the bourgeois Liberal Party in the Duma.

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Church be entrusted to him. . . . To-day your spiritual mother, the Holy Orthodox Church, stands before you (the Duma deputies) not only as before the representatives of the people, but also as before her spiritual children" (ibid).

This is pure clericalism. The Church is higher than the State, as the eternal and divine is higher than the transient and the human. The Church will never forgive the State for secularizating Church property. The Church demands for itself a premier and ruling position. For it, the Duma deputies are not only—or more accurately, not so much—representatives of the people as "spiritual children."

These are not merely officials in surplices, as the Social-Democrat Surkov expressed it, but *advocates of serfdom* in surplices. The defence of the feudal privileges of the Church, the open defence of mediævalism—that is the essence of the policy of the majority of the Third Duma clergy. Bishop Eulogius is far from being an exception. Gepetsky also girds against "secularization" as an intolerable "insult" (April 27th). The priest Mashkevitch thunders against the *Octobrists'** report as an attempt "to undermine those historical and canonical foundations upon which our Church life has rested, and must rest . . . to direct the life and activity of the Russian Orthodox Church from the canonical path to a path . . . on which . . . the real princes of the Church—the bishops—must concede almost all their rights inherited from the apostles to the temporal princes. . . . This is nothing but an encroachment on others' property, an encroachment on the right of the Church and on its property . . . the reporter is leading us to the destruction of the canonical order of Church life; he wants to subordinate the Orthodox Church, with all its economic functions, to the State Duma, to a body which consists of the most divers elements of the tolerated and non-tolerable faiths in our State" (April 27th).

The Russian Narodniks and Liberals consoled themselves for a long time, or more accurately, deluded themselves with the "theory" that in Russia there is no basis for militant clericalism, for a struggle between the "princes of the Church" and the temporal power, etc. Our revolution† dispersed this illusion together with the other Narod-

* The right wing of the Liberal bourgeoisie who were content to accept the restricted reforms offered in the Tzar's manifesto of October 1905.

† i.e. the Revolution of 1905-6.

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nik and Liberal illusions. Clericalism existed in a concealed form while the autocracy existed intact and inviolable. The all-powerful police and bureaucracy hid from the eyes of "society" and the people the class struggle generally, and the struggle between the "serf-owners in surplices" and the "base rabble" in particular. The very first breach the revolutionary proletariat and the peasantry made in the feudal autocracy gave the secret away. As soon as the masses of the proletariat and the advanced elements of the bourgeois democracy began to use their political freedom—to use the right to organize, which they seized at the end of 1905—the reactionary classes also began to organize, independently and openly. These classes had not so organized or come out openly under complete absolutism; but not because they were weak—because they were strong!—not because they were incapable of organizing and waging a political struggle, but because they did not then see any serious need for independent class organization. They did not believe that a mass movement against the autocracy and the adherents of feudalism was possible in Russia. They trusted wholly to the whip and its efficacy for restraining the rabble. The first wounds inflicted on the autocracy forced the social elements which supported the autocracy, and needed it, to come out into the open. The old whip was no longer effective against the masses who were able to call forth the events of January 9th—who organized the strike movement of 1905, and the October-December revolution. They had to resort to independent political action. The Council of the United Nobility had to organize the Black Hundreds and resort to the most reckless demagogy. The "princes of the Church"—the bishops—had to organize the reactionary clergy into an independent force.

The characteristic feature of the Third Duma and the Third-Duma period of the Russian counter-revolution is precisely the fact that this organization of reactionary forces, which came to the surface and began to develop on a national scale, needed imperatively a special Black-Hundred-bourgeois "parliament." Militant clericalism revealed itself, and Russian Social-Democracy will now have occasion to witness and to take part in conflicts between bourgeois clericals and bourgeois anti-clericals. Our general task is to help the proletariat to organize itself into a separate class, able to separate

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itself from bourgeois democracy; but part of this task is to utilize all the means of propaganda and agitation, including the tribune of the Duma, to explain to the masses the difference between Socialist anti-Clericalism and bourgeois anti-Clericalism.

The Octobrists and Cadets, who in the Third Duma attacked the Extreme Rights, the Clericals and the Government, facilitated our task enormously by revealing the attitude of the bourgeoisie towards the Church and religion. The legal press of the Cadets and of the so-called progressives is laying great stress on the question of the Old Believers, and is making a great deal of the fact that the Cadets spoke out against the Government, and that they have even, though slightly, "taken the path of the reforms," promised on October 30th. We, however, are far more interested in the principle underlying the question, i.e., the attitude of the bourgeoisie generally—including the Cadets, who claim to be democrats—towards religion and the Church. We must not permit the relatively minor question—namely the conflict between the Old Believers and the dominant Church, and the conduct of the Octobrists who are bound to, and are even financially dependent upon, the Old Believers to some extent (for example, it is said that "Golos Moskvi"* is financed by the Old Believers)—to eclipse the fundamental question of the interests and the policy of the bourgeoisie as a class.

Read the speech of Count Uvarov, who has Octobrist leanings, but who resigned from the Octobrist fraction. He spoke after the Social-Democrat Sukov, but he evaded the fundamental principles of the question raised by the workers' deputy. Uvarov merely attacked the Synod and the Procurator of the Holy Synod for their and his reluctance to give the Duma information on certain Church revenues and the expenditure of congregation funds. The official representative of the Octobrists, Kamensky, followed the same line; he demanded (April 29th) the restoration of the congregation, "in order to strengthen the Greek Church." Kapustin, the so-called "left Octobrist," developed the same line of thought. "If we turn to the life of the people," he exclaims, "to the life of the agricultural population, we will see a sad state of affairs—religious life is crumbling, the greatest, the only foundation of the moral order of the population is crumbling. . . . What are we to substitute for the promptings of

* The Voice of Moscow, the daily organ of the Octobrists.

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conscience? Surely, we cannot substitute the conception of the class struggle or the rights of one class or another? These are sad concepts which have now penetrated our social life. Hence in order that religion may continue to be the basis of morality, and that it may be accessible to the whole population, it is necessary that the guides of this religion should enjoy adequate authority. . . ."

The representative of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie wishes to strengthen religion—wishes to strengthen the influence of religion on the masses. He realizes the inadequacy, and the obsolescence of the "officials in surplices" and even the harm they do to the ruling classes by *weakening* the authority of the Church. The Octobrist fights against the exaggerations of Clericalism and police surveillance in order to *increase* the influence of religion on the masses; to substitute more subtle and more elaborate methods of stupefying the people in place of methods which are too gross, too antiquated, and too played-out, to serve their purpose. Police religion is no longer adequate for stupefying the masses. Give us a religion that is brighter, more cultured, more up-to-date; one that will do its work through self-governing parish congregations—that is what the capitalists demand from autocracy.

And Cadet Karulov shares this same point of view *completely*. This "Liberal" renegade (who evolved from the *Narodnaya Volya* to the Right Cadets) denounces the "denationalization" of the Church, meaning by this, that the masses, the laymen, are prevented from taking part in Church life. He thinks it "*shocking*" (that is what he said) that the masses are "losing their faith." After the manner of the Menshéviks he bewails the fact that the "tremendous value inherent in the Church . . . is being destroyed . . . that tremendous harm is being done, not only to the Church, but also to the State." He describes the disgustingly hypocritical assertion of the fanatic Eulogius—that "the task of the Church is eternal, immutable . . . and that means that it is impossible to combine the Church and politics"—as "golden words." He protested against the union of the Church with the Black Hundreds *in order* that the Church may "with greater power and glory than to-day, perform its great and holy work, in the spirit of Christ—of love and liberty."

Comrade Belousob did very well to ridicule these "lyrical" words

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of Karaulov from the Duma tribune. But derision was not enough by a long way. It should have been explained—and this must be done from the Duma tribune at the first opportunity—that the Cadet point of view is completely identical with that of the Octobrists and expresses nothing more than the tendency of "cultured" capital to organize the stupefying of the people with religious narcotics in more subtle styles of Church deception than those which the ordinary conservative Russian "batushka"* has hitherto employed.

In order to keep the people in spiritual slavery, the closest bond must be maintained between the Church and the Black Hundreds—say the Die-hard landowners and the old bullying police officials, through the mouth of Purishkevitch. You are mistaken, gentlemen, retort the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, through the mouth of Karaulov: you will drive the people away from religion altogether by such means. Let us act more cleverly, more cunningly and with more subtlety. Let us clear the gross and stupid Black-Hundreds out of the way, let us proclaim war on the "denationalization of the Church," let us inscribe on our banner the "golden words" of Bishop Eulogius that the Church is "above politics." Only in this way will we be able to dupe at least part of the backward workers and, in particular, the petty bourgeoisie and the peasants. Only in this way will we be able to help the regenerated Church to fulfil its "great, holy work" of retaining the masses of the people in spiritual slavery.

Our Liberal press, including the newspaper *Retch*,† has lately been taking Struve and Co. to task for publishing the compendium *Vekh*.‡ But Karaulov, the official speaker of the Constitutional Democratic Party in the Duma, exposed excellently the despicable hypocrisy of this denunciation and repudiation of Struve and Co. Struve says what Karaulov and Milyukov think. The Liberals blame Struve *only* for having blurted out the truth, only because he showed his cards too plainly. The Liberals, who censure *Vekh* and continue to support the Constitutional Democratic Party, deceive the people in the most shameless way by condemning the incautiously frank *words* while continuing *to do exactly* what these words imply.

* "Little father," priest. † "Speech" The organ of the Constitutional Democratic Party.
‡ "Guide Post" a liberal bourgeois compendium of articles published in 1909 reflecting reactionary mystical views that were prevalent among the intellectuals in the period of reaction.

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Little need be said regarding the conduct of the Trudoviki* in the Duma during the debates on this question. As always, there was a marked difference between the attitude of the Trudovik-peasant and Trudovik-intellectual to the disadvantage of the latter, who is always ready to follow the lead of the Constitutional Democrats. Peasant Rozhkov, in his speech, it is true, exposed his complete lack of political class consciousness; he merely repeated the platitudes of the Cadets, that the League of the Russian People† helps, not to strengthen, but to destroy faith; but he could not suggest any programme. On the other hand, when he artlessly began to tell the naked, unvarnished truth about the exactions of the clergy, the extortions of the priests—about how, in addition to their fee for conducting the marriage ceremony, they demand "a bottle of Vodka, sandwiches, a pound of tea, *and sometimes that which I dare not speak of from this tribune*" (April 29th, p. 2,259 of the stenographic report)—*this* roused the Black Hundred Duma to a passion! A savage cry rose from the Right benches: "Shame!" "Disgraceful!" The Black Hundreds howled, realizing that the plain peasant tale of the exactions of the priests and of the "rates" charged for ceremonies, would revolutionize the masses more than any theoretical, or tactical, anti-religious or anti-Church declarations. And the gang of die-hards, defending autocracy in the Third Duma, frightened their lackey-chairman Meyendorf into ordering Rozhkov to leave the tribune. (The Social-Democrats, aided by several Trudoviks, Constitutional-Democrats, and others, protested against this.)

Although it was very elementary, the speech of Trudovik-peasant Rozhkov revealed perfectly the wide gulf separating the hypocritical, calculated-reactionary defence of religion by the Cadets and the primitive, ignorant use-and-wont religiousness of the peasant, whose living conditions roused within him—involuntarily, and in spite of himself—a truly revolutionary anger against the exactions of the priests and a readiness to fight determinedly against mediævalism. The Cadets are the representatives of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie who wish to restore and strengthen religion against the people. The Rozhkovs are the representatives of the revolutionary

* Labourists, representatives of the peasants.
† The official title of the organisation of the Black Hundreds.

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bourgeois democracy—undeveloped, ignorant, downtrodden, dependent on others, scattered, but containing within itself far-from-exhausted reserves of revolutionary potentiality for the struggle against the landowners, the priests and the autocracy.

The intellectual-Trudovik Rozanov drew closer to the Cadets much less unconsciously than Rozhkov did. Rozanov talked about the separation of the Church from the State as the demand of the "lefts," but he could not refrain from uttering reactionary petty-bourgeois phrases about modifying the electoral law in such a way as to prevent the clergy from participating in the political struggle. The revolutionary temper which spontaneously bursts forth, when the typical, middle peasant begins to tell the truth about his living conditions, is totally absent when the intellectual-Trudovik speaks; instead, we hear diffuse and sometimes despicable phrases. The truism, that only when the Russian peasant masses follow the lead of the proletariat will they be able to overthrow the feudal landowners, the serf-owners in surplices, and the feudal monarchists who oppress and crush them, is confirmed for the hundredth and thousandth time.

The representative of the workers' party and the working-class, the Social-Democrat Surkov was the only one in the Duma who raised the discussion to the level of a discussion of principles, and stated without equivocation what the attitude of the proletariat is, and what the attitude of all consistent and vivid democrats should be towards the Church and religion. "Religion is the opiate of the people." . . . "Not a single groat of the people's money . . . to these mortal enemies of the people who stultify the minds of the people"—this straightforward, courageous, open war-cry of the Socialist rang out like a challenge in the Black Hundred Duma, and was taken up by millions of the proletariat who will disseminate it among the masses and who, when the time comes, will transmute it into revolutionary action.

Social Democrat, No. 6, June 17th (4), 1909.

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IV

ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MILITANT MATERIALISM

. . . This statement* declares that not all those who have gathered round the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism* are Communists, but that all are consistent materialists. I think that this union of Communists and non-Communists is absolutely necessary and correctly defines the tasks of the magazine. One of the most serious and dangerous mistakes Communists (and revolutionaries generally, who have successfully carried out the beginnings of a great revolution) can make is to imagine that a revolution can be accomplished by the hands of revolutionaries alone. On the contrary, in order that serious revolutionary work may be successful, it is necessary to understand and be guided by the fact that revolutionaries can only play the role of the vanguard of the really advanced and progressive class. The vanguard fulfils its tasks as such only when it is able to keep in touch with the masses it leads, and actually lead the whole mass forward. Without a union with non-Communists, in the most varied fields of activity, successful Communist constructive effort is out of the question.

This is also true of the work in defence of materialism and Marxism which the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism* has undertaken. The main currents of advanced social thought in Russia have, fortunately, a sound materialist tradition. Apart from G. V. Plekhanov, it is enough to mention Chernishevsky, from whom the modern Narodniks (People's Socialists, Socialist-revolutionaries, etc.) frequently retreated in their pursuit of fashionable, reactionary philosophical doctrines, yielding to the glamour of the so-called "last word" in European science and unable to see the various types of bourgeois servility, prejudice, and reaction beneath this glamour.

In any case, in Russia there are still, and no doubt there will be for a long time to come, materialists in the non-Communist camp, and it is our imperative duty to enlist the co-operation of all the adherents of consistent and militant materialism in the struggle

* The statement of principles of the Editorial Board of the magazine *Under the Banner of Marxism*, with which this article deals.—*Ed.*

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against philosophical reaction and the philosophical prejudices of the so-called "cultured classes." Dietzgen senior, who must not be confused with his equally pretentious but far more inept son, correctly, neatly, and clearly, expressed the fundamental point of view of Marxism on the philosophic currents which hold sway in bourgeois countries, and gain the attention of their philosophers and publicists, when he said that in modern society a professor of philosophy, in most cases, is nothing but the "diploma-ed lackey of clericalism."

Our Russian intelligentzia, who, like their brethren in all backward countries, consider themselves to be advanced, do not like to carry this question to the plane indicated by the words of Dietzgen. And they do not like to do this because they hate the truth. It is sufficient to reflect, if only for a moment, on the manner on which modern cultured people are politically, economically and socially dependent upon the ruling bourgeoisie, to understand that Dietzgen's biting characterization is absolutely correct. It is enough to recall the great majority of fashionable philosophical trends which crop up so frequently in European countries—from those, say, which arose in connection with the discovery of radium, to those which now strive to attach themselves to Einstein—in order to see the connection between the class interests and the class position of the bourgeoisie, the support it gives to every form of religion, and the ideological content of fashionable philosophical trends.

From what has been indicated it will be clear that a magazine which desires to be an organ of militant materialism must be an aggressive organ, first, in the sense that it will persistently expose and attack all modern "diploma-ed lackeys of clericalism," irrespective of whether they speak as representatives of the official sciences, or as free-lances, calling themselves "democratic lefts or ideological-Socialist" publicists.

Secondly, such a magazine must be an organ of militant atheism. We have departments or at least government institutions which carry on this work. But this work is being carried on very sluggishly, very unsatisfactorily; apparently it is restricted by our real Russian (also Soviet Russian) bureaucracy. It is very essential, therefore, that, in supplementing the work of the competent government institutions, in correcting and stimulating this work, the magazine which has set itself the aim of becoming an organ of militant material-

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ism should carry on untiring atheist propaganda and struggle. We must very carefully study all the literature on this subject in all languages, and translate, or at least review all that which has the slightest value in this field.

Engels long ago advised the leaders of the modern proletariat to translate the militant Atheist literature of the end of the eighteenth century for mass distribution among the people. To our shame, we have not yet done this (one of the many proofs that it is much easier to win power in a revolutionary epoch than to use it correctly). Sometimes our sluggishness, indolence, and inability in this sphere is excused by all kinds of "bombastic" arguments, as for example, that the old atheist literature of the eighteenth century is obsolete, unscientific, naïve, etc. There is nothing worse in the world than these pseudo-scientific sophisms, for they serve to conceal either pedantry, or a complete lack of understanding of Marxism. Certainly there is much that is unscientific and naïve in the Atheist works of these revolutionary atheists of the eighteenth century. But nobody prevents the publishers of such journals from abbreviating them and supplying them with brief notes, indicating the progress made in the scientific criticism of religion since the end of the eighteenth century, giving references to writings of more recent date, etc. A Marxist could not make a worse mistake than to think that the many millions of people (particularly peasants and artisans) who are condemned by modern society to ignorance, illiteracy and prejudices can extricate themselves from this ignorance only by following the straight line of purely Marxist education. It is essential to give these masses the greatest variety of atheist propaganda material—to acquaint them with facts from the most diversified fields of life. Every way of approach to them must be tried in order to interest them, to rouse them from their religious slumber, to shake them up by most varied ways and means.

The lively, talented writings of the old atheists of the eighteenth century, which attacked skilfully and openly the clericalism prevailing in their day, will prove very often to be a thousand times more suitable for arousing the people from their religious slumber than the dull, dry, paraphrasing of Marxism, hardly ever illustrated by well selected facts, with which our literature abounds and which (to be frank) frequently distorts Marxism. All the works of Marx and Engels

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of any importance have been translated here. The fear that the old Atheism and the old materialism will remain unsupplemented by the changes which Marx and Engels have introduced, is absolutely unfounded. The most important thing—forgotten most frequently by our alleged Marxian Communists—who really distort Marxism—is to be able to rouse the as yet undeveloped masses into taking an intelligent interest in the religious question and in the criticism of religion.

On the other hand, glance at the representatives of modern scientific criticism of religion. These representatives of the cultured bourgeoisie nearly always "supplement" their own refutation of religious prejudices with arguments which immediately reveal them as the ideological slaves of the bourgeoisie and as "diploma-ed lackeys of clericalism."

Two examples. Professor R. J. Wipper published a booklet in 1918: *The Rise of Christianity* (published by "Faros," Moscow). Summarizing the main achievements of modern science, the author not only refrains from combating the prejudices and deceits which are the weapons of the Church as a political organization—he not only evades these questions, but puts forward the positively ridiculous and reactionary claim to have risen above the "extremes" of the idealist and the materialist alike. This is servility to the reigning bourgeoisie which all over the world spends hundreds of millions of roubles, out of the profits it has wrung from the workers, in support of religion.

The well-known German scholar, Arthur Drews, refuting religious prejudices and fables in his book, *The Christ Myth*, proves that there was no historical Jesus; but at the end of his book he puts in a plea for religion! Not for the old religion, but for a regenerated, purged religion, one that will be able to withstand the "naturalist stream which is growing stronger every day" (p. 238, fourth German edition, 1910). This is a straightforward conscious reactionary, who is openly helping the exploiters to substitute new, viler and more despicable religious prejudices for old and rotten ones.

This does not mean that Drews' book should not have been translated. It does not mean that Communists and all consistent materialists must, while uniting to a certain extent with the progressive section of the bourgeoisie, persistently expose it when it becomes

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reactionary. It means that to refrain or hold aloof from joining with the modern representatives of the bourgeoisie of the eighteenth century, i.e., of the epoch when it was revolutionary, is a betrayal of Marxism and materialism because a "union" with Drews, in one form or another, to one degree or another, is essential for us in the struggle against the prevailing religious obscurantism.

Under the Banner of Marxism, which wishes to be an organ of militant Materialism, must devote much space to Atheist propaganda, to reviews of the literature on this subject; and must make good the tremendous deficiencies in the work of our government in this field. It is particularly important to use those books and pamphlets which contain numbers of concrete facts and comparisons, which illustrate the unity between the class interests and class organizations of the modern bourgeoisie and the existing religious bodies and institutions and organizations for religious propaganda.

All the material relating to the United States of America is extremely important; although it reveals least of all the official, governmental ties between religion and capital. Nevertheless, it will enable us to see more clearly that the so-called "modern democracy" (before which the Menshevíks, Socialist Revolutionaries, and a section of the anarchists, etc., make profound obeisance) represents nothing more than freedom to preach what is advantageous for the bourgeoisie. And for the bourgeoisie it is advantageous that the most reactionary ideas should be preached—religion, obscurantism, defence of the exploiters, and so forth.

We trust that the magazine which desires to be the organ of militant Materialism will give our reading public reviews of atheist literature and will indicate to which circles of readers and in what relation particular books are generally suitable. We hope also that it will indicate what has been published (only tolerably good translations should be indicated, and there are not so many of them) and what has yet to be published.

Besides unity with consistent materialists who do not belong to the Communist Party there stands before Militant Materialism the great task—one not of less importance, but perhaps even of most importance—of uniting with those representatives of modern natural science who incline toward materialism and who are not afraid to defend it and preach it in opposition to the fashionable, philosophical

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wobblings towards idealism and scepticism which now prevail in so-called "educated society."

In Number 1-2 of *Under the Banner of Marxism*, A. Timiryasev's article on Einstein's theory of Relativity permits us to hope that the journal will also succeed in bringing about this second unity. More attention must be paid to this. It must be borne in mind that the sharp change which modern natural science is at present undergoing gives rise to reactionary philosophical schools and trends. It is extremely important therefore to study the questions which the latest revolution in the field of natural science has brought to the front, and to invite natural scientists to do this work in this philosophical magazine. Unless this is done militant Materialism will be neither militant nor materialist. In the first number of *Under the Banner of Marxism*, Timiryasev pointed out that the overwhelming mass of representatives of the bourgeois intelligentzia in all countries has fastened upon Einstein's theory, although (according to Timiryasev) Einstein himself does not actively oppose the principles of materialism. This applies not only to Einstein, but to a large number, if not the majority of the great reformers of natural science, beginning with the end of the nineteenth century.

But in order to avoid reacting to such a phenomenon unintelligently, we must understand that no natural science, no materialism whatever, can hold out in the struggle against the onslaught of bourgeois ideas and the restoration of bourgeois philosophy without a solid philosophical basis. In order to give aid to this struggle and help to carry it to its successful conclusion, the natural scientist must be a *modern* Materialist—a conscious adherent of that Materialism which Marx represents; that is, he must be a *dialectical* Materialist. To achieve this the staff of *Under the Banner of Marxism* must organize a systematic study of Hegelian dialectics from the Materialist point of view, i.e., the dialectics which Marx applied concretely in his *Capital*, and used in his historical and political works with such success that to-day the awakening of new classes to life and battle in the East (Japan, India, China)—i.e., those hundreds of millions of humanity who comprise the greater part of the population of the world, and who, until now, have, by their historical inactivity and historical slumber, caused stagnation and decay in many of the foremost states of Europe—this awakening of new peoples and new

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classes to life confirms the correctness of Marxism daily and more and more.

Certainly, such a study, interpretation and propaganda of Hegel's dialectics is extraordinarily difficult; and, no doubt, mistakes will be made in the early stages. But only those who do nothing make no mistakes. Basing ourselves on the manner in which Marx applied the materialist conception of Hegelian dialectics, we can and must work out these dialectics from all sides. The magazine must publish excerpts from the principal works of Hegel; must interpret them materialistically, and give examples of how Marx applied dialectics, as well as examples of dialectics from the field of economic and political relations. Modern history, particularly modern imperialist war and revolution, provide innumerable examples of this kind. The editors and staff of *Under the Banner of Marxism* should, I think, represent a sort of "Association of Materialist Friends of Hegelian Philosophy." Modern natural scientists will find (if they will seek, and if we can learn to help them) in the materialist interpretation of Hegelian dialectics a number of answers to those philosophical questions which the revolution in natural science has brought to the front and which cause the intellectual admirers of bourgeois fashions to "slip" into the reactionary camp.

Unless we set ourselves this task and carry it out systematically, materialism will never be militant Materialism. It will remain (to use an expression of Schedrin's) not a fighter, but one who is fought. Unless we do this, the great investigators in natural science will be as helpless in their philosophical deductions and generalizations as they have been heretofore. For natural science is progressing so rapidly, is passing through a period of such profound revolutionary change in all fields, that we cannot possibly dispense with philosophical deductions. . . .

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V

WHAT IS RELIGION GOOD FOR?

THE reader will probably remember the sensation that was caused by the lecture delivered by M. A. Stakhovich, the marshal of the nobility of the province of Oryol, at a missionary congress, in the course of which he urged that *liberty of conscience* should be recognized by law. The conservative press, led by *Moskovskiye Vyedomosti*, is conducting a furious campaign against Mr. Stakhovich. It cannot find names bad enough to call him; and almost goes so far as to charge the whole nobility of Oryol with high treason for having re-elected Mr. Stakhovich as their marshal. Now, this re-election is indeed very significant, and to a certain extent attains the character of a demonstration of the nobility against police tyranny and outrage.

"Stakhovich," says *Moskovskiye Vyedomosti*, "is known not so much as marshal of the nobility, but as jolly Misha Stakhovich, the soul of good company, who possesses the gift of the gab. . . ." (1901, No. 348).* The worse for you, gentlemen, you champions of the big stick. If even your jolly landlords begin to talk about liberty of conscience then the despicable conduct of the priests and the police must indeed have exceeded all bounds. . . . "What concern has the 'intellectual,' frivolous crowd that instigates and applauds the Stakhoviches, for the interests of our holy orthodox faith, and our time-honoured attitude towards it?" . . . Once again: All the worse for you, gentlemen, champions of the autocracy, of the orthodox faith and of nationalism. A fine system our police-ridden autocracy must be, indeed, if it has permeated even religion with the spirit of the jail and to such an extent that the "Stakhoviches" (who have no stable religious convictions, but who are interested, as we shall see, in preserving religion) become completely indifferent towards (if they do not actually hate) this notorious "national faith"! . . . "Thanks to this 'delusion,' we fear and avoid sin, and carry out our obligations uncomplainingly, no matter how severe they may be, because we find the strength and courage to

* The passages quoted are from an article entitled, "Who is Responsible for Mr. Stakhovich?" signed by A.P.G. and published in *Moskovskiye Vyedomosti*, December 18, 1901.

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bear sorrow and privations, and forgo pride in times of success and good fortune. . . ." So this is what it is, is it? The orthodox faith is dear to them because it teaches them to bear misfortune so "uncomplainingly"! What a profitable faith it is, indeed—for the governing classes! In a society so organized that an insignificant minority enjoys wealth and power, while the masses constantly suffer "deprivation" and bear "severe obligations," it is quite natural for the exploiters to sympathize with a religion that teaches us to bear "uncomplainingly" the woes of hell on earth, in the hope of an alleged paradise in the skies. But in its zeal *Moskovskiye Vyedomosti* becomes too garrulous. So garrulous in fact that *unwittingly it spoke the truth!* Listen further: ". . . . They do not realize that thanks to this 'delusion' they, the Stakhoviches, eat well, sleep peacefully, and live merrily."

This is the sacred truth! Thus, in fact, it is. It is thanks to this wide spread of religious "delusions" among the masses of the people, that the Stakhoviches and the Oblomovs,* are able to sleep peacefully and all our capitalists who live by the labour of these masses likewise. And likewise also the *Moskovskiye Vyedomosti* itself. The more religious prejudices give place to Socialist consciousness, the nearer will be the day of victory of the proletariat—the victory that will emancipate all the oppressed classes from the slavery they endure in modern society. . . .

Iskra, No. 16, February 14th, 1902.

* The indolent hero of Goncharov's novel of the same name.

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VI

LEO TOLSTOY AS A MIRROR OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

To identify the name of this great writer with the revolution which he obviously did not understand, and from which he obviously stood apart, may seem, at first glance, strange and artificial. Surely a thing that obviously does not reflect phenomena accurately cannot be called a mirror? But our revolution is an extraordinarily complex phenomenon. Among the mass of its direct agents and participants there are many social elements which have also failed obviously to understand what was taking place, and have also abandoned the historical tasks which the course of events set before them. And a really great writer could not help reflecting at least some of the essential aspects of the revolution.

The legal Russian press, crammed with articles, letters and notes on Tolstoy's eightieth anniversary, is interested least of all in an analysis of his works from the point of view of the character of the Russian revolution and its driving forces. The whole of this press is chock full of sickening hypocrisy—hypocrisy of a twofold nature: "official," and "liberal." The first is the vulgar hypocrisy of the venal scribe who bidden yesterday to attack Tolstoy is to-day bidden to discover patriotism in him, and to observe towards him in the eyes of Europe all the rules of propriety. Everybody knows what these scribes have been paid, and they cannot deceive anyone. But the liberal hypocrisy is much more subtle, and therefore much more harmful and dangerous. To listen to the Cadet Balaleikins of the *Rech* one would imagine that their sympathy for Tolstoy was most ardent and complete. Actually, their calculated declamations and bombastic phrases about the "great God-seeker" are just sheer hypocrisy because the Russian liberal neither believes in the Tolstoyan God, nor sympathizes with the Tolstoyan criticism of the existing order. He associates himself with a popular name in order to increase his political capital—to play the role of leader of the national opposition. He tries by means of crashing and thundering phrases to drown the cry for a direct and clear answer to the question: what causes the glaring contradictions of "Tolstoyanism"?—what deficiencies and weaknesses of our revolution do they reflect?

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The contradictions in the works, views and teachings of the Tolstoyan school are really glaring contradictions.

On the one hand we have the gifted writer who is not only able to draw an incomparable picture of Russian life, but is able to produce first-class world literature. On the other hand we have the landowner wearing the martyr's crown in the name of Christ.

On the one hand—a remarkably strong, direct and sincere protest against social lies and hypocrisies. On the other hand—the "Tolstoyan," i.e., the exhausted hysterical, misery-mongering Russian intellectual, who, publicly beating his breast, cries: "I am bad, I am vile, but I am striving for moral self-perfection; I no longer eat meat but live on rice cutlets!"

On the one hand, ruthless criticism of capitalist exploitation; exposure of government violence, of the comedy of justice, and state administration; revelation of the depths of the contradictions between the growth of wealth and of the acquirements of civilization and the growth of poverty, of the brutalizing and torturing of the working masses. On the other hand—the fanatical preaching of "non-resistance to evil."

On the one hand, the soberest realism, and the rending away of all and every kind of mask. On the other hand, the advocacy of one of the most corrupt things existing in the world, religion—the attempt to replace the official state priests by priests of moral conviction, i.e., the cultivation of the most subtle, and therefore the most especially loathsome kind of clericalism. In truth:

"You are poor; you are abundant;
You are powerful; you are helpless;
Mother Russia!"*

In face of these contradictions, it is quite obvious that Tolstoy could not understand either the workers' movement and its role in the struggle for Socialism, or the Russian revolution. But these contradictions in the views and teachings of Tolstoy are not accidental. They are expressions of the contradictions in Russian life during the last third of the nineteenth century. The patriarchal village, only yesterday freed from serfdom, was literally handed over to the violence and plunder of capital and the State. The old basis of

* From Nekrassov's poem: "Who Lives Well in Russia."

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peasant economy and peasant life, a basis which had really maintained itself for centuries, broke down with unusual rapidity. And the contradictions in Tolstoy's views must be evaluated not from the point of view of the modern labour movement and modern Socialism (such an evaluation, naturally, is essential, but it is not enough), but from the point of view of the protest which arose from the patriarchal Russian village against the onslaught of capitalism, against the ruin of the masses and their expropriation from the land. Tolstoy as a prophet discovering new recipes for the salvation of humanity is merely amusing—and therefore those Russian and foreign "Tolstoyans" who seek to transform this the very weakest side of his teaching into a dogma are thoroughly contemptible.

Tolstoy is great as the expression of those ideas and moods which arose among the millions of the Russian peasantry with the advance of the bourgeois revolution in Russia. Tolstoy is original because his views, harmful as a whole, express in their totality precisely the distinguishing characteristic of our revolution, viz., a *peasant*-bourgeois revolution. Thus understood, the contradictions in Tolstoy's views are a reflex of the contradictory historical conditions within which the activities of the peasantry in our revolution were constrained. On the one hand, centuries of feudal oppression and decades of accelerating post-reform ruination* heaped up mountains of hate, anger, and desperate resolve. The effort to sweep away the State Church, the landowners and the landowning government—to destroy all the old forms and systems of land ownership—to purge the land—to create in the place of the police-class government a community of free and equal small-peasants—runs like a thread through every historical step the peasantry have taken in our revolution; and, undoubtedly, the ideological content of Tolstoy's writings corresponds much more to this struggle of the peasantry than to the abstract "Christian anarchism," sought to be deduced as a "system" from his conceptual outlook.

On the other hand, the peasantry, striving towards a new form of social life, had an extremely vague, patriarchal-religious conception of the type of social life they desired, of the type of struggle required to win their freedom, of the type of leaders required in this struggle, of the attitude the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intelli-

* I.e., the emancipation of the serfs, which really led to the ruin of the peasantry.—*Ed.*

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gentzia would take towards the interests of this peasant revolution, and why a violent overthrow of the Tsar's power was an indispensable preliminary to the expropriation of the big landlords. The whole past life of the peasantry had taught them to hate the landlords and the government officials, but it did not, and could not, teach them where to go for an answer to all these questions. In our revolution, only a minority of the peasantry actually fought and organized for revolution to any appreciable extent; and only a very small minority took up arms to destroy their enemies—to destroy the Tsarist lackeys and the defenders of the landowners. The majority of the peasantry wept and prayed, moralized and dreamed, wrote petitions and sent "petitioners" quite in the spirit of Leo Nikolayevitch Tolstoy! And as always happens in such cases, the Tolstoyan abstention from politics, the Tolstoyan abjuration of politics, indifference to politics, misunderstanding of politics, resulted in a minority, only, siding with the conscious and revolutionary proletariat, while the majority fell a prey to the unprincipled, menial, bourgeois intellectuals, who, under the name of Cadets, ran from the meetings of the Trudoviks, were reconciled, and promised to reconcile, until they were finally driven out with a kick of the soldier's jackboot. Tolstoyan ideas are a mirror of the weaknesses and the deficiencies of our peasant uprising, a reflection of the flabbiness of the patriarchal village and the ingrained cowardice of the "thrifty moujik."

Let us take the mutineers in the army of 1905-1906. These fighters in our revolution represented socially an intermediary between the peasantry and the proletariat. The latter being in the minority, the movement in the army never attained anything near to the degree of solidarity shown in Russia as a whole, or anything like such party class-consciousness as the proletariat revealed when they became Social-Democrats as if at a wave of the hand. On the other hand, nothing can be more mistaken than the opinion that the failure of the mutinies was due to the fact that the officers did not lead them. On the contrary, the gigantic progress the revolution has made since the time of the *Narodnaya Volya* is shown precisely in the fact that the "ignorant cattle" whose independence so frightened the Liberal landowners and Liberal officers, took up arms *against* their officers. The soldier was full of sympathy for the peasant's cause; his eyes flashed at the mention of land. More than

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once in the army the initiative was in the hands of the soldier masses—but in practice no resolute use was made of this power. The soldiers wavered. After several days—sometimes after several hours—having killed one hated commander, they released the others, negotiated with the authorities, and quietly went to execution, or bending their bodies beneath the lash, harnessed themselves once again to the yoke, completely in the spirit of Leo Nikolayevitch Tolstoy!

Tolstoy reflected the accumulated hate, the ripened aspiration for a better life, the desire to throw off the past—and also the immaturity, the dreamy contemplativeness, the political inexperience, and the revolutionary flabbiness of the villages. Historico-economic conditions explain the inevitability of the rise of the revolutionary struggle of the masses. They also explain the unpreparedness of the masses for struggle; and also that Tolstoyan non-resistance to evil, which was the most serious cause of the defeat of the first revolutionary campaigns.

It is said that beaten armies learn well. Certainly a comparison between a revolutionary class and an army can be made only to a very limited extent. The breakdown of capitalism changes hourly and sharpens hourly the conditions which drove the peasant millions, united by hatred of the feudal landowners and their government, into a revolutionary-democratic struggle. Among the peasantry itself the growth of exchange, the domination of the market and the power of money, displace increasingly antiquated patriarchalism and its accompanying philosophical* ideology. But the first years of the revolution and the first defeats in the mass revolutionary struggle undoubtedly achieved one thing. They delivered the death-blow to the one-time softness and flabbiness of the masses. The lines of demarcation have grown sharper. Boundaries have been fixed for classes and parties. Under the educating hammer of Stolypin will be developed inevitably, through the undeviating and consistent agitation of the revolutionary Social-Democrats, not only from the Socialist proletariat, but also from amongst the democratic masses of the peasantry, more and more hardened fighters who will be less and less likely to fall into our historical sin of Tolstoyanism.

Proletarii, No. 35, 11th (24) Sept., 1908.

* In MSS., Tolstoyan.

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VII

TWO LETTERS TO A. M. GORKY*

I

DEAR ALEXEI MAXIMOVICH!

Whatever are you up to? It's simply dreadful! Really!

Yesterday I read in *Ryech* your answer to the "howl" about Dostoyevsky and was ready to rejoice; but to-day the liquidationist newspaper arrived, and it contains a paragraph of your article which was not printed in *Ryech*.

This is the paragraph:

"But 'god-seeking'† should be given up, for the time being [only for the time being?]. It is a useless occupation. It is no use seeking something that has not been hidden. Without sowing you cannot reap. You have no god, you have not yet—[not yet!]—created him. Gods are not sought after—*they are created*; life does not invent, it creates."

It appears then, that you are opposed to "God-seeking" only for the time being!! It appears then, that you are opposed to God-seeking *only* in order to substitute God-creating for it!!

Now! Is it not dreadful to think that *you* should reason in this way?

* Lenin's letter was called forth by the appearance of an article by A. M. Gorky, "The Karamazov Episode" in *Russkoye Slovo* (*Russian Word*), No. 219, October 5th (September 22nd), 1913, protesting against the dramatisation of Dostoyevsky's reactionary novel, *Devils* by the Moscow Art Theatre. The bourgeois press and an important group of writers came out against Gorky's protest with a "howl" for Dostoyevsky, as Lenin expressed it, in the evening edition of the *Financial News* (*Birzheviye Vyedomosty*). Gorky answered in a new article, "The Karamazov Episode Again," in *Russkoye Slovo*, No. 248, November 9th (October 27th). Large extracts from Gorky's answer were printed in *Ryech*, November 10th (October 28th), without the concluding paragraph referred to in Lenin's Letter of November 11th (October 29th); Gorky's article was reprinted in full in the *Novaya Rabochaya Gazeta* (*New Workers' Paper*), No. 69, November 11th (October 29th). Lenin devoted three letters to Gorky's article, one of which was a small letter containing only a few lines. This letter, as are the other two, is included in the *Lenin Collection*, I, pp. 145-151, and was not printed by the editors in the *Collected Works*. The first letter, in which Lenin comes out against the God-creating of Gorky, is printed in full. The second letter, printed in this volume, begins with the fifth page. The first four pages of the letter were not at the disposal of the editors of the *Collected Works*. This letter is evidently an answer to a letter from Gorky, stimulated by Lenin's criticism.

When the article "The Karamazov Episode Again" was reprinted in the collection *Articles from 1905 to 1916*, published by "Parus" (Petrograd, 1918), Gorky omitted the concluding paragraphs on God-creating which had called for the "furious" attack of Lenin.

The novel mentioned at the end of the first letter was a novel by V. Voitinsky (pseudonym, C. Petrov) sent to the editorial office of *Prosveshcheniye*. The novel was not approved by Gorky.

† During the period of reaction a section of the Bolsheviks, prominent among whom were Lunacharsky and Gorky, gave way to religious moods and developed a philosophy that was known as "god seeking" or "god creating."

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There is as much difference between God-seeking, God-building, God-creating and God-begetting, etc., as there is between a yellow devil and a blue devil. To speak of God-seeking, not in order to oppose *all* devils and gods, all ideological corpse-worshipping (every little god, even the purest, most ideal, not sought for, but conceived little god, is corpse worshipping)—but simply to choose between a blue devil and a yellow one—that is a hundred times worse than not speaking about it at all.

In the freest countries, in countries where an appeal "to the democracy, to the people, to public opinion and to science" is *totally* out of place—in such countries, America, Switzerland, etc., the minds of the people and of the workers are stultified by precisely this idea of a pure, spiritually conceived little god. That is why all religious ideas, all ideas about any little god, even of flirting with a little god are an unspeakable abomination and one particularly tolerated (frequently even desired) by the *democratic* bourgeoisie precisely because it is the most dangerous abomination—the most disgusting "contamination." The crowd is much more able to see through millions of *physical* sins, dirty tricks, violences and infections which are therefore much less dangerous than is the *subtle*, spiritual idea of the little god arrayed in the smartest of "ideological" costumes. A Catholic priest who violates young girls (about whom I happened to read just now in a German newspaper) is *much less* dangerous to "democracy" than are priests who do not wear surplices, priests without vulgar religion, ideological and democratic priests, who preach the creation and making of little gods. The first type of priest can be *easily* exposed, condemned, and driven out—but the second *cannot* be driven out so simply. It is a thousand times more difficult to expose *him*; since not a single "frail and pitifully weak" philistine will agree to "condemn" him.

And you, knowing the "frailty and pitiful weakness" of the Russian (why Russian? Is the Italian better?) philistine soul, bewilder this soul with an attractive looking sweatmeat wrapped in gaudy tinsel which contains at the heart of its sugary hodge-podge a deadly poison.

Really, this is dreadful!

"Enough now of self-castigation, which with us takes the place of self-criticism."

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Is not God-building the *worst* form of self-castigation? Everyone engaged in building *God* or even merely conceiving of God-building, *castigates* himself in the worst possible way, because instead of occupying himself with "deeds" he indulges in self-contemplation, self-admiration and moreover "contemplates" the dirtiest, most stupid, and most servile features of his own "ego" glorified by self-love into a god of his own building.

From the social and impersonal point of view, *all* God-building is the *adoring* self-contemplation of a dull, frail philistinism—a dreamy "self-castigation" of the "despondent and weary" philistine and petty-bourgeois (as you said very truly about the *soul*—only you should not have said the "Russian" soul, but the *petty-bourgeois*, because the Jewish, the Italian and the English petty-bourgeois are all the same). Rotten philistinism is disgusting always, but "democratic philistinism," engaged in its ideological corpse worship, is especially disgusting.

Reading your article attentively, and *trying* to find out how this *slip* occurred, I confess that I am at a loss. What is this? Remnants of the "Confession" of which *you yourself* disapproved? An echo of it?

Or else—perhaps, it is an unsuccessful attempt *to bend* to the *general democratic* point of view instead of to the *proletarian* point of view? Perhaps, in speaking to "democracy in general" you thought it necessary (excuse the expression) to prattle as one does in speaking to children? Perhaps in order to "speak in popular language," to the petty-bourgeoisie, you felt it necessary to make a momentary concession to its prejudices?

But is not this approach wrong in every way, and in every sense?

I said above that in *democratic* countries it is totally out of place for a proletarian writer to appeal to "democracy, the people, public opinion and science." But what about Russia? Even in Russia such an appeal is not quite in place, because there too it would sound like flattering petty-bourgeois prejudices. Even Izgoyev of *Russkaya Mysl** would willingly subscribe to a vague general appeal. What is the use of issuing slogans which may be very easy for *you* to distinguish from Izgoyevism *but* which it would be impossible for

* *Russian Thought*, a monthly magazine which supported the imperialist strivings of the big Russian capitalists.—*Ed.*

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the *reader* so to distinguish? Why make up democratic bouquets for the reader instead of making a *clear* distinction between the *petty-bourgeoisie* (frail, pitiful, wavering, weak, weary, despondent, God-contemplating, self-contemplating, God-building, God-begetting, self-castigating, *helplessly-anarchistic*—excellent expression!!—etc., etc.) and the *proletariat* (intelligent, not phrase-bound, able to distinguish between *bourgeois* "science and public opinion" and their own, between bourgeois democracy and proletarian)?

Why ever did you do it?

It is devilishly vexing.

Yours, V. U.

P.S.—I have sent the novel by registered post. Have you received it?

P.P.S.—Take medical treatment, I mean it seriously, so that you may travel in the winter *without catching cold* (it is dangerous to travel in winter).

Yours, V. Ulyanov.

(Written in the middle of November, 1913. Printed first in 1924 in the *Lenin Collection*, I.)

II

On the question of God, the divine, and all connected therewith, you contradict yourself—the same contradiction I think which I pointed out to you in our conversations at our last meeting at Capri. You had broken away (or appeared to have broken away) from the "Vperyodists,"* without grasping clearly the ideological basis of "Vperyodism."

The same is true in the present case. You are "vexed," you say, and you "cannot understand how the phrase 'for the time being' slipped in." And yet, at the same time, you defend the idea of God and of God-building!

"God is a complex of those ideas, worked out by tribes, by nations, by humanity at large, which arouse and organize the social emotions,

* The supporters of the journal *Vperyo* (*Forward*) issued by the so-called "left Bolsheviks," Lunacharsky, Bogadanov, etc., in 1908-1917. This must not be confused with the *Vperyod* published by the Bolsheviks in 1904 after the *Iskra* passed into the hands of the Mensheviks.—*Ed.*

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and which serve to unite the individual with society, and to curb zoological individualism."

This theory is obviously of a piece with the theory, or the guess of Bogdanov and Lunacharsky.

And it is obviously wrong, and obviously reactionary. Like the Christian Socialists (the sorriest sort of "Socialism" and its vilest perversion) you employ a trick which (in spite of your best intentions) is on all fours with the hocus-pocus of the priests. All that has in actual practice been *historically* and socially associated with the idea of God (bedevilment, irrational prejudice, and the glorification of ignorance and wretchedness, on the one hand,—and serfdom and the monarchy, on the other), are eliminated while in place of this historical and social reality is inserted a nice little petty-bourgeois phrase (God = "the idea which arouses and organizes social emotions").

By this you mean something "Good and Beautiful," "Truth," "Justice," and all that sort of thing. But what you intended remains an intention—your own subjective "innocent desire." Your words being written went to the *masses* and their *meaning* was determined, not by these your good intentions, but by the *correlation of social forces*—by the definite objective inter-relation of classes. Consequently these relations being what they are (whether you wish it or do not), what you have actually done has been to embellish and sweeten the idea of the clericals, of Purishkevich, of Nicholas II and Struve. Because *actually* the idea of God helps *them* to keep the people in slavery. By redecorating the idea of God you actually repaired the chains by which the ignorant workers and peasants are bound. "There!"—Messrs. Parson and Co. will say—"see what a fine and wise idea (idea of God) this is! Even '*your*' democrats, your leaders, admit it; and we (Messrs. Parson and Co.) are the ministers of this idea."

It is not true to say that God is a complex of the ideas which arouse and organize the social emotions. This is Bogdanovian *idealism*, which obscures the material origin of ideas. God is (historically and socially) first of all a complex of ideas engendered by the ignorance of mankind, and by its subjection, firstly beneath the forces of nature, secondly by class-oppression—ideas which *perpetuate* this ignorance and damp down the class struggle. There was a

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time in history when, in spite of this origin, and this the real meaning of the idea of God, the democratic and proletarian struggle took the form of a struggle of *one religious* idea against another.

But this time has long been past.

Now in Europe, just as in Russia, *every* defence or justification of the idea of God, even the most refined and well intentioned, is a justification of reaction.

Your definition—God is a complex of ideas which "arouse and organize social emotions and serve to unite the individual with society, to curb zoological individualism"—is thoroughly reactionary and completely bourgeois.

Why is it reactionary? Because it re-vivifies the clerical-servile idea of "curbing" zoology. As a matter of fact "zoological individualism" has never been curbed by the idea of God. It was "curbed" by the primitive herd, and the primitive commune. The idea of God has *always* lulled and blunted "social emotions," and substituted concern for the dead for interest in the living. It has *always* involved the idea of slavery (of the worst and most hopeless slavery). The idea of God has never "united the individual with society." It has always bound the oppressed *classes* by faith in the divinity to submission to their oppressors.

Your definition is bourgeois (and unscientific and unhistorical) because it deals with general, "Robinson Crusoe" conceptions—and not with definite *classes* situated in a definite historical epoch.

The idea of God, of the Syrian and similar savage tribes (and semi-savage as well), is one thing; that of Struve and Co. is quite another. In both cases, however, this idea is fostered by class-rule, and in each case it fosters that rule in return. "The popular" conception of little gods and of the Divine is the result of "popular" ignorance, exactly as is the "popular" conception of the Tsar, of goblins, of dragging wives by the hair. How you can call the "popular" conception of God a "democratic" one is absolutely beyond me.

It is not true to say that philosophical idealism "always has in view only the interests of the individual." Did Descartes have the interests of the individual more in mind than Gassendi? Or Fichte and Hegel more than Feuerbach?

"God creating is the process of the further development and accumulation of social principles in the individual and in society"

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—this is positively terrible ! ! If there were freedom in Russia, the whole bourgeoisie would have praised you for a sociology and theology so utterly bourgeois as this !

Well, enough for the present ; this letter is too long as it is. Again I press your hand warmly, and wish you good health.

Yours,

V. U.

(Written in December, 1913. First printed in 1924 in the *Lenin Collection*, I.)

VIII

ON COMMUNIST AND RELIGIOUS ETHICS

From a speech given to the Third All-Russian Congress of the Young Communist League by the Soviet Union, Oct. 3rd, 1920.

. . . First of all, I shall deal here with the question of Communist ethics.

You must train yourselves to be Communists. The task of the Young Communist League is to organize its practical activity in such a manner that in studying, in organizing and consolidating itself, and in fighting on, it will be training itself and all those who regard it as their leader. It will thus be training Communists. The whole work of training, educating, and instructing the present-day youth must be directed towards imbuing them with Communist ethics.

But is there such a thing as Communist ethics ? Is there such a thing as Communist morality ? Of course there is. It is frequently asserted that we have no ethics, and very frequently the bourgeoisie says that we Communists deny all morality. That is one of their methods of confusing the issue, of throwing dust into the eyes of the workers and peasants.

In what sense do we deny ethics, morals ?

In the sense in which they are preached by the bourgeoisie, a sense which deduces these morals from God's commandments. Of course,

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we say that we do not believe in God. We know perfectly well that the clergy, the landlords, and the bourgeoisie all claimed to speak in the name of God, in order to protect their own interests as exploiters. Or, instead of deducing their ethics from the commandments of morality, from the commandments of God, they deduced them from idealistic or semi-idealistic phrases which in substance were always very similar to divine commandments.

We deny all morality taken from superhuman or non-class conceptions. We say that this is a deception, a swindle, a befogging of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and capitalists.

We say that our morality is wholly subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. We deduce our morality from the facts and needs of the class struggle of the proletariat.

The old society was based on the oppression of all the workers and peasants by the landlords and capitalists. We had to destroy this society. We had to overthrow these landowners and capitalists. But to do this, organization was necessary. God could not create such organization.

Such organization could only be created by the factories and workshops, only by the trained proletariat, awakened from its former slumber. Only when this class had come into existence did the mass movement commence which led to what we have to-day —to the victory of the proletarian revolution in one of the weakest countries in the world—a country which for three years has resisted the attacks of the bourgeoisie of the whole world. We see how the proletarian revolution is growing all over the whole world. And we can say now, on the basis of experience, that only the proletariat could have created that compact force which is carrying along with it the once disunited and disorganized peasantry—a force which has withstood all the attacks of all the exploiters. Only this class can help the toiling masses to unite their forces, to close their ranks, to establish and build up a definitely Communist society and finally to complete it.

That is why we say that a morality taken from outside of human society does not exist for us; it is a fraud. For us morality is subordinated to the interests of the proletarian class struggle. . . .